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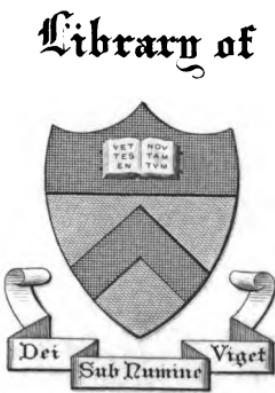
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A DEVOUT COMMENTARY
ON
The Epistle to the Ephesians

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A DEVOUT COMMENTARY
ON
THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

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F. PLACID CONWAY, O.P., S.T.L.

F. VINCENT McNABB, O.P., S.T.L.

Imprimatur

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A DEVOUT COMMENTARY
ON
The Epistle to the Ephesians

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УТИЯЗНИИ
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PREFACE

THIS book, not being written by a scholar, is not addressed to scholars. It is not a critical treatise, but a book of spiritual reading.

All I have attempted to do is to provide devout souls, who cannot consult Latin authors, with a clear explanation of the meaning of St. Paul in one of his most sublime Epistles.

Throughout the whole work I have taken the Angelical Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, as my guide, and stating this here, once for all, will prevent the necessity of constant references to his Commentary on every page. Often whole sentences are literal translations of his words.

When I have used other authors I have generally made a reference to their works. Among others, Natalis Alexander has been often consulted.

It will be noticed that I have constantly referred to parallel texts in the Old and New Testaments without quoting the words, and this for two reasons. The first is to avoid increasing the bulk of the volume. Secondly, because it is good for the reader to search out the texts for himself. In this way he may become more familiar with the different books of Holy Scripture, and perhaps having found the text quoted, he may feel drawn to finish the chapter. Pains have been taken to make these references as correct as possible. In the case of the Psalms, where

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two numbers are given, the first is from the Vulgate, the second, in brackets, from the Hebrew division. For instance, in the first chapter, on page 47, Ps. cxxvii. (cxxviii.) 4. This means that the words quoted form the fourth verse of Psalm cxxvii., according to the Vulgate division, followed in the Roman Breviary, and of Psalm cxxviii. according to the Hebrew division usually adopted in this country.

St. Jerome, in his introduction to the Book of Isaias the Prophet, says, "Ignorantia Scripturæ est ignorantia Christi." "Ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

The first reflection these words suggest is an alarming one. How ignorant, then, multitudes of devout Christians must be of Christ, as they have read so little of Holy Scripture! But St. Jerome would have quite allowed that there are two ways of knowing the truths about Christ contained in the Bible, the direct and the indirect, just as there are two ways of being enlightened by the sun, either by sitting in the full glare of his dazzling rays, or indirectly receiving his light reflected by various objects. In like manner we may learn Christ from Holy Scripture, directly, by reading and study of the actual inspired text, or indirectly by reading books written by holy and learned men, embodying the teachings of Holy Writ and reflecting the light of the inspired Word.

Multitudes of Christian people, either unable to read, or who, though able, have read very little of the actual text of Holy Scripture, know Christ well and serve Him faithfully, being instructed by others who are perfectly familiar with the Bible.

For many this is without doubt the easiest and best way

to learn Christ, and for the mass of the unlearned it ever has been, and no doubt ever will be, the only practical way in which they must learn their religion, and thus the "Word" of God becomes "as a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path." Without this "the tongue of the sucking child would cleave to the roof of his mouth from thirst; the young children would ask for bread," and they would starve "if there were no man to break it unto them." (Ps. ciii. [cxix.] 105; Lam. iv. 4.)

Catholics know that their faith does not rest primarily on the Bible. The Apostles preached Christ crucified and risen before the Gospels were written, and many died for Him who had never read a word of the New Testament. We have our Faith from the living voice of the living Church, and the only way in which we can know that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the Holy Ghost is its Author, is by the testimony and authority of the Catholic Church which Christ has appointed to teach all nations.

This fundamental truth every Catholic knows well. It is the primary Principle of his religion, the immovable Rock on which rests his faith, the harbour of Refuge to which he flies in all storms, so as not "to be blown about by every wind of doctrine," the strong Fortress that makes him secure in every attack of the enemies of the faith. We are convinced that our Holy Mother the Church knows all contained in the Bible, and carries out all its commands. We know that the Holy Scripture belongs by right to her, that she loves it, preserves and defends it, and that her infallible voice alone can declare to us what books are, and what are not, the inspired Word of God.

This fact, combined with the misuse of the Word of God by Protestants, no doubt in great measure explains

why it is that Catholics are not as careful as they might be to read the text of Holy Scripture.

Latterly a widespread movement has begun in favour of more universal reading and study of the Bible. During the last twenty years much has been effected in this direction in France. The Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII. in 1893, beginning "Providentissimus Deus," on the study of the Scripture, attracted the attention of Catholics throughout the world to this point.

Pope Pius VI. had already written "that the faithful should be urged to read the Holy Scripture, as the abundant source which ought to be left open to all, of pure morals and doctrine."*

To show what the custom of Catholics in early times must have been, it is interesting to read the advice given by St. Jerome to his friend Gaudentius, who had asked his guidance as to the education of his infant daughter Pacatula. "She is now," St. Jerome replies, "a child without teeth and without ideas, but, as soon as she is seven years old . . . she should, until she is grown up, learn by heart the Psalms and the Books of Solomon; the Gospels, the Apostles, and the Prophets should be the treasure of her heart."

This little book is a humble contribution towards the revival of the study of the Holy Scripture among Catholics.

"Continue thou in those things thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee: knowing of whom thou hast learnt them; and because from thine infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable for teaching, reproofing, correcting, and instructing in justice."†

* Letter to the Archbishop of Florence. † 2 Tim. iii. 14.

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INTRODUCTION

I. EPHESUS

THE city of Ephesus, now completely destroyed, was one of the most important places in the eastern world. It was situated near the sea, on the western coast of Asia Minor, on the river Cayster, in the Roman Proconsular Province of Asia. It stood nearly opposite to the island of Samos, and its harbour was one of the most frequented of ancient times, being a highly convenient one for the commerce between the eastern and western world.

In very early days the Phœnicians had founded a city and built a temple in honour of some female deity, by the bank of the Cayster. Later on, in the year 19, before Christ, Ephesus became the capital of the province called Asia, and was governed by Proconsuls from Rome.

Important as the commerce of Ephesus undoubtedly was, the city was still more renowned as a religious centre. The temple of Diana* was one of the wonders of the ancient world. This was its chief glory, and drew to the city an immense number of strangers from all parts, while the various industries connected with the worship of the

* “Scribat (S. Paulus) ad Ephesios Dianam colentes, non hanc venatricem quæ arcum tenet atque succincta est, sed illam multimammiam, ut scilicet ex ipsa quoque effigie mentirentur omnium eam bestiarum et viventium esse nutricem.”—ST. JEROME, in *Epist. ad Ephesios.*

temple made many settle down as permanent inhabitants. An example of this is found in Demetrius, the silversmith, who made small silver models of the temple to sell among the pilgrims.* Before the time of our Lord there was a considerable Jewish colony at Ephesus, attracted by the commercial advantages of the city, and they no doubt were the pilgrims from Asia mentioned in Acts ii. 9. Asia would mean, not the continent, but that large portion of Asia Minor called the Province of Asia, extending along the western coast from Lycia in the south to Bithynia in the north, Ephesus being the capital.

The temple of Diana was situated on a hill outside the city, where at present nothing is seen except a small and very poor Turkish village. "The topography of the place is very simple," writes Mr. Lewin. "The city stood on the south of a plain about five miles long, from east to west, and three miles broad, the northern boundary being Mount Gallesius, the eastern Mount Pactyas, the southern Mount Prion or Pion, and on the west it was washed by the sea. The sides of the mountains were precipitous, and shut up the plain like a *stadium*, or racecourse. About half-way along the southern side of the plain stood a little forward the circular hill of Coressus, famous for its quarries of beautiful marble, the source of the surrounding magnificence. To the north-east of Coressus rose out of the middle of the plain a little mount, the seat of the modern village of Ayasaluch, or the Holy Divine (*Άγιος Θεόλογος*), as St. John was called, who passed his latter days at Ephesus. The Cayster entered the plain at the north-east corner, and flowed diagonally across it (but with many meanders) to the south-western side, where it discharged

* Acts xix. 24.

itself into the sea. As one entered the broad mouth of the river, and after ascending a little distance, but before reaching the city, one came to an opening on the right hand, leading in a south-eastern direction to what had originally been an extensive lake, once famous for its fish, but was now a broad basin artificially embanked, and filled with shipping. This was the celebrated port, the busy scene of the commerce of all nations. Ephesus itself covered Mount Coressus and part of the plain to the north of it, and extended on the west to the port, and on the south along the valley between Mount Coressus and Prion, or Pion, and covered part of Prion, or Pion, itself."*

The temple, no remains of which are now visible, stood on a hill, and is said to have "gleamed like a meteor" in the eyes of those entering the city from the sea. It was built of marble, which glittered in the sun. More than two centuries were occupied in building this heathen shrine, which was 425 feet long, 220 feet broad, and possessed 127 pillars of marble 60 feet high, each one the gift of some king.

The famous statue of Diana was of wood, some authors telling us it was constructed of ebony, others of cedar, and others of vine wood.

The worship of Diana was very elaborate, and the temple was not only the most prominent building in the city, but its chief source of wealth and influence. The whole of the provinces of Asia contributed to its erection. In this temple in ancient times hung the masterpiece of the celebrated artist Apelles, the subject being Alexander the Great, grasping a thunderbolt.

* *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by THOMAS LEWIN, M.A., vol. i., p. 319, in the magnificently illustrated edition of George Bell and Sons, London.

EPHESUS IN ST. PAUL'S TIME

The first time that we find St. Paul at Ephesus was on his journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, A.D. 53. He sailed, St. Luke tells us, from Corinth, and with him Priscilla and her husband Aquila, fervent converts to the faith. St. Paul on his arrival in Ephesus disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, as his custom was in every place, but he remained no long time in the city. "When they desired him, that he would tarry a longer time, he consented not, but taking his leave, and saying, I will return to you again, God willing, he departed from Ephesus."*

After St. Paul had gone, leaving Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, the city was visited by a Jew named Apollo, or Apollos, "born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures."† He had been a disciple of St. John the Baptist, and had been by him "instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, spoke and taught diligently the things that are of Jesus, knowing only the Baptism of John." Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching in the synagogue, and found that he knew little or nothing of the Christian religion, except the great truth that Jesus was the Messiah. They therefore took him home and "expounded the way of the Lord to him more diligently." He converted several in Ephesus, and then sailed for Corinth with letters of introduction from the Christians of Ephesus to those of Corinth. Here he laboured much, and we read of him in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written at Ephesus. It is supposed that he afterwards became Bishop of Corinth.

During his third apostolic journey St. Paul visited

* Acts xviii. 20.

† Acts xviii. 24.

Ephesus again, remaining this time for more than two years. Probably the Apostle lodged at first in the house of Aquila, who was, like him, a tentmaker. That St. Paul worked for his own maintenance at his trade we can infer from what he himself tells us in his Epistle to the Corinthians. He was in Ephesus when he wrote that Epistle.*

The first incident after his arrival is described by St. Luke.† The Apostle found twelve disciples who had been converted by the preaching of Apollos, but on inquiry he discovered that they had not received Christian Baptism, but only that of St. John. He instructed and baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus," which means with Christian Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He then confirmed them, and the Holy Ghost came down upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

St. Paul first preached to the Jews of Ephesus, going into the synagogue, expounding the Scriptures, proving that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, and explaining to them about the kingdom of God, that is, the Church. He persevered for three months, making many converts, but the majority hardened their hearts and resisted the grace of God.

As some of the Jews were inclined to inflame the multitude against the Apostle, he thought it more prudent to leave the synagogue and to address himself to the heathens. He therefore began "to dispute daily in the school of a man named Tyrannus."‡ These public conferences "he continued for the space of two years," and great multitudes of Greeks as well as Jews heard the gospel

* 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12. † Acts xix. 1-8. ‡ Acts xix. 9.

from his mouth, "so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles." Besides this place of daily public preaching, St. Paul was constantly occupied in private houses,* exhorting and instructing all willing to hear him. The number of Christians grew apace, though with much opposition, for we find him writing to the Corinthians, "I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost, for a great door and evident is open to me; and many adversaries."† That these adversaries caused him great trouble and suffering, and that they were Jews and not heathens, we can gather from the same Epistle, for St. Paul writes: "I die daily . . . if (according to man) I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me, if the dead rise not again?"‡ He compares his conflicts with the enemies of the gospel to those mortal combats with wild beasts which were one of the favourite amusements in the great theatre of Ephesus, a gigantic building with seats for fifty thousand spectators.

Also in his pathetic address to "the ancients of the Church of Ephesus" at Miletus, St. Paul reminds them how "he had served the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and temptations which befell him by the conspiracies of the Jews."§

To assist his Apostle in his difficult task of planting the Christian faith in this rich and voluptuous city completely devoted to the worship of Diana, and peculiarly full of diabolical influence, "God wrought by the hand of Paul, more than common miracles." Even St. Paul's personal presence was not needed, for things that had touched him were endowed with supernatural power, "so that even there

* Acts xx. 20.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 31.

§ Acts xx. 19.

were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them.”*

Magical arts were much practised in Ephesus, as was natural under the shadow of the temple of Diana. Seeing, therefore, the undeniable miracles worked by St. Paul, he was esteemed by many to be merely a cleverer sorcerer than others, and as having the knowledge of more potent spells. Some of the Jews, seeing what wonders St. Paul was able to effect by the invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus, conceived the idea of using it themselves as a magical spell, with the startling result related by St. Luke.† It appears that one of the chief priests of the Jews, named Sceva, had seven sons who were rash enough to try this. Two of them attempted to exorcise a man possessed by an evil spirit, saying, “I conjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” “But the wicked spirit, answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

By this they learnt that the most Holy Name must not be used in vain, as a mere charm or spell, and the fact becoming “known to all the Jews and Gentiles that dwelt at Ephesus, fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.”

This judgment on the sons of Sceva not only terrified Jews and Gentiles, but awakened the conscience of many who had embraced the Christian faith, but were still practising magical arts and indulging in vain superstitions. Thoroughly alarmed by what had happened, they “came

* Acts xix. 11, 12.

† Acts xix. 13.

confessing and declaring their deeds. And many of them who had followed curious arts brought together their books, and burnt them before all, and counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and was confirmed." *

"These pieces of silver," writes Mr. Lewin, "were either Attic drachmæ of 9½d. each, or (which is more probable) Roman denarii of 8½d. each. If the former, the amount would be £2,031; and if the latter £1,770; in either case, more particularly if we take into account the value of bullion at that period, an enormous sum to be sacrificed by Christian converts, not perhaps the most wealthy part of the Ephesian community." †

The last incident in Ephesus before St. Paul left the city, in the early part of 57 B.C., shows how widely spread Christianity had become, not only in the city, but throughout the province, since St. Paul had abode there. This was the riot caused by Demetrius the silversmith, at the time of the public games, when immense crowds visited Ephesus for a whole month, a riot so graphically described by St. Luke.

Demetrius made his money by the manufacture of little silver shrines representing the temple of Diana. At the time of the games he generally reaped an abundant harvest, but such was the influence of St. Paul, that his profits had much diminished. He called together a meeting of the men who worked at this trade and excited them against the Apostle by an appeal, first to their pockets and then to their religious feelings. His crafty speech is thus shortly summarised by St. Luke. "Sirs, you know that our gain is by this trade, and you see and hear that this Paul

* Acts xix. 13-21.

† Vol. i. chap. xiii.

by persuasion has drawn away a great multitude, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia, saying, 'They are not gods that are made by hands.' So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also the temple of great Diana shall be reputed for nothing; yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

This speech produced all the effect that Demetrius wished. The audience were worked up to great excitement. They were full of anger, and began to raise the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," a cry which before long roused the whole city. The mob laid hands on two of St. Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, and with them as prisoners they all rushed headlong to the great theatre, which, with its semicircular benches, tier above tier, could accommodate fifty thousand people.

Here there was an indescribable state of confusion. "Some cried one thing, some another. For the assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not for what cause they had come together." St. Paul, having discovered the real reason of the tumult, desired to present himself in the theatre and boldly to address the people; but the rulers or Asiarchs, who were in authority during the public games, fearing that the excited rabble might tear him to pieces, "sent unto him, desiring that he would not venture himself into the theatre."

In the midst of the confusion the Jews put forward a great enemy of St. Paul to stir up the minds of the people against the Apostle and the religion which he had preached. This was Alexander, of whom afterwards St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy: "Alexander the coppersmith hath done me much evil: the Lord will reward him according to

his works ; whom do thou also avoid, for he hath greatly withheld our words."* This only made the confusion more intense, for "as soon as they perceived him to be a Jew, all with one voice for the space of about two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

At last, when they had begun to tire, one of the authorities of the city, the town clerk, or as Mr. Lewin calls him, the recorder of the city, managed to obtain a hearing, and persuaded the people to return to their homes after giving his speech.† St. Luke tells us that he "dismissed the assembly."

This riot is an evident proof of the wonderful effect of St. Paul's preaching, and shows the influence he had gained over a considerable number of the population. In fact, not only had he established a church in Ephesus itself, but had been the means of spreading the faith into other parts of Asia, as, for example, Colossæ, Hierapolis, and Laodicea.

After this St. Paul, having now remained at Ephesus for three years, from the summer of 54 to Pentecost 57, determined to go into Europe and visit Macedonia. Therefore, "calling to him the disciples, and exhorting them, he took his leave, and set forward to go into Macedonia."‡

On his return to Asia, after visiting various places in Europe, he did not enter Ephesus. Sailing from Mitylene he touched at the island of Chios, some forty miles north of Ephesus, and the next day he arrived at the island of Samos, opposite the port of Ephesus. His apostolic heart

* 2 Tim. iv. 14. It is disputed whether these are two Alexanders or the same man.

† Acts xix. 35-40. ‡ Acts xx. 1.

must have yearned to visit his spiritual children, but he knew it was not God's will, so he sailed on at once to Miletus, a port on the mainland some thirty or forty miles south of Ephesus. He determined on this course, says St. Luke, "lest he should be stayed any time in Asia, for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to keep the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem." *

But not entirely to neglect the Christians of Ephesus, he sent from Miletus calling the ancients of the Church to meet him there. Then the Apostle made them that pathetic address which we find recorded by St. Luke in Acts xx. 18-36. Then, "kneeling down, he prayed with them all. And there was much weeping among them all; and falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him, being grieved, most of all, for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more."

Did St. Paul ever see Ephesus again? From what St. Luke says, in the passage just cited, it would appear not, though he may not have spoken as a prophet, but only from human probability when he told them "they should see his face no more."

Mr. Lewin, in his *Life of St. Paul*, considers it at least more probable that he was in the city of Ephesus, and imprisoned there in a tower of Mount Pion, or Prion, which still bears the traditional name of St. Paul's prison.†

It is certain that the Apostle was in Troas, in the north of Asia Minor, in A.D. 65. He tells us himself,

* Acts xx. 15, 16.

† In the *Dictionary of the Bible* (JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.) this is denied. "The name St. Paul's prison, which is applied to a Greek tower . . . is purely fanciful. There is no record that St. Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus."

in his letter to St. Timothy,* that he had left his cloak, his books (probably the Old Testament), and his parchments (perhaps the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke and possibly letters) at Troas, in the house of his friend and disciple Carpus. This looks as if he had left Troas suddenly and without preparation. On the theory that he was arrested there and carried as a prisoner to Ephesus, this becomes quite intelligible. "How could Paul have parted with all these" (books and parchments), asks Mr. Lewin, "except under the most dire necessity, more particularly when he was bound for Ephesus (as announced in his letter to Timothy),† where he expected to encounter the Gnostics and other heretics, against whom he had so earnestly warned Timothy a few months before.

So it seems likely that St. Paul was carried to Ephesus, brought before the Proconsul of Asia, Barea Soranus, a man of the highest character for humanity and justice, and by him committed to the judgment of the Emperor Nero.‡

The Bible tells us nothing of the coming of St. John the Evangelist to Ephesus, where he lived for many years, dying there in extreme old age. The island of Patmos on which he wrote the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, is not far from Ephesus. The Church of Ephesus is the first mentioned of the seven churches of Asia, and merits praise for its attitude towards the false apostles, but some blame is due to the angel of that church, "because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance and do the first

* 2 Tim. iv. 13.

† 1 Tim. iii. 14.

‡ The next year (66) Soranus himself was put to death by Nero.

works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, unless thou do penance."*

How literally this threat has been fulfilled any traveller to the banks of the Cayster can perceive. The rich and populous city has utterly disappeared. Heaps of earth containing buried columns that once stood proudly in the great temple are all that remain. The harbour that was silting up even in St. Paul's day is now a marsh; even the noble church of St. John, constructed by Justinian, has disappeared. Desolation reigns over the whole neighbourhood once so flourishing. Nothing is seen but a few miserable huts of a Turkish village, which in memory of St. John is called Ayasaluch, or "the Holy Divine." The candlestick has indeed been removed from its place!

WHEN AND WHERE DID ST. PAUL WRITE THIS EPISTLE?

We see from the Epistle itself that when he wrote it the Apostle was a prisoner. "I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ."† The universal Christian tradition, of which St. John Chrysostom and St. Jerome are witnesses, tells us that it was while the Apostle was in captivity in Rome. He was imprisoned twice in Rome, and the general opinion is that he wrote to the Ephesians during the period of his first imprisonment. This would make it probable that it was written about the year of our Lord 63.

WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY TO THE EPHESIANS?

A doubt on this point is suggested by the fact that in

* Apoc. ii. 2-5.

† Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20.

some ancient manuscripts the words "at Ephesus"** do not occur. Marcion, a heretic of the third century, changed the title of the Epistle, calling it the Epistle to the Laodiceans instead of Ephesians. Tertullian reproaches him for doing this against the tradition of the Church by his own private judgment.

In modern times there has been a good deal of controversy on this point, and many have maintained that the Epistle was meant, not exclusively for the Ephesians, but also for the other churches of Asia, many of which were not founded by St. Paul. I need not enter at length into the arguments internal and external on both sides, for anyone who desires can examine the question in books easily obtained.

The strongest argument against the Epistle being addressed exclusively to the Ephesians is found in its general and impersonal style, so unlike the intimate and affectionate way in which he generally addresses his own converts.

St. Paul had founded the Church of Ephesus, had dwelt there for three years, except for an absence of some months, and for these years he had "continued to exhort them day and night with tears."† If we consider the terms of intimate friendship between St. Paul and the Christians of Ephesus, how can we account for the distant, general tone of this letter, written as if he had no personal knowledge of the people he is addressing? The style of the Epistle to the Colossians, written about the same time, is much more personal and affectionate,‡ though the Church of

* The title "To the Ephesians" is found in all MSS. and versions, and all Church tradition connects the Epistle with Ephesians.—See art. "Ephesians" in HASTINGS' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

† Acts xx. 31. ‡ Col. i. 8, 9, 24; ii. 1.

Colossæ had not been founded by the Apostle. He sends salutations to the faithful of Colossæ and Laodicea whom he had not seen, but none to his own dear converts the fruit of his labours and sufferings in Ephesus.

Moved by these and similar considerations, a great number of critics, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, have concluded that the Epistle was an encyclical addressed to other churches as well as that of Ephesus. Among these are Garnier, Glaire, Lamy, Bisping, Fouard, etc., among Catholics; and among non-Catholics Bengel, Weiss, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Hort, and others. In the opinion of these writers it was addressed to the churches of Asia Minor, and Tychicus, who had charge of it, was to see that it went the round of the churches, and this Epistle was the one alluded to in the letter to the Colossians,* where St. Paul tells them to read the letter written to the Laodiceans. The fact that the Epistle was a circular one would account for the absence of personal salutations, and for certain expressions which seem to imply want of intimate knowledge of the circumstances of those addressed. He left everything personal about himself to his "dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord," Tychicus, "who will make known to you all things."†

On the other hand, Drach, Goldhagen, Cornely, Meyer, Shenkel, etc., hold that the Epistle was addressed directly to the Church at Ephesus. The external argument is in favour of this opinion, for with three exceptions all the Greek manuscripts have the words "at Ephesus" in the first verse. Most of the Fathers and ancient versions have these words also. As to the argument from the style of the Epistle, the advocates of this opinion consider that

* Col. iv. 16.

† Eph. vi. 21.

it is not conclusive, though they admit the difficulty it raises. They point out that not only this Epistle, but also the Epistles to the Thessalonians and the second to the Corinthians contain no personal greetings. But the great argument in favour of this view is found in the constant and universal tradition that assigns to this letter the title of Epistle to the Ephesians. Drach and Cornely, though admitting the difficulty, do not consider it sufficiently strong to upset the tradition of the Church.

After all the controversy is not on a point of primary importance. As long as it is admitted that St. Paul was the author of the Epistle it is not of such vital importance to decide whether he addressed himself only to the Ephesians or with them to other churches in Asia. Even those who consider the Epistle to be of the nature of an encyclical, allow that it was delivered first to the Ephesian Church, and that the original MS. probably remained in that city. This allowed, it does not seem of such moment to decide whether it was also intended for other places.*

The likeness between the Epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Colossians is very striking. There are many completely parallel passages, as will be evident to any reader who compares them together with the least attention. This is accounted for by the fact that both were written by St. Paul at the same time and under the same circumstances. They were both confided to the same bearer, Tychicus,† whom St. Paul calls his dear brother,

* Vide *Epîtres de St. Paul*, par M. l'ABBE DRACH; *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, VIGOUROUX; SMITH's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

† Tychicus belonged to the Province of Asia, and St. Luke tells us (Acts xx. 4) that he was St. Paul's companion in his journey from Corinth to Jerusalem. The Apostle speaks highly of him both to the

a faithful minister of the Lord and his companion in the service of God.

Dr. Cunningham Geikie writes on this point as follows: "I assume that the Epistle now standing in our version as addressed to the Ephesians was really so, and was neither that which in Colossians is spoken of as the Epistle to the Laodiceans, nor a circular letter to the churches of Pro-consular Asia generally, to be passed from one to the other. To go into critical details would be out of place here and of no real use, whatever the opinion accepted. Indeed, there are so many illustrious champions, ancient and modern, of all these views, that the only result of minutely studying the question is immeasurable confusion, profitable to no ordinary mortal. For my part, I think the arguments in support of the Epistle being unquestionably by St. Paul, and written to the Christians at Ephesus, given by Meyer, Hertzberg, Schenkel, and Braune, among others, quite outweigh those of the advanced school, represented by Von Soden and such ultra-destructives, and I refer any reader who has a taste for dry-as-dust investigations, to them."*

Ephesians and to the Colossians. He laboured with St. Paul in Rome, and went with him into Crete. He was also the bearer of the First Epistle to St. Timothy.

* *St. Paul, His Life and Epistles*, vol. ii. chap. ii. J. Nisbet and Co., 1895.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

CHAPTER I

1 PAUL, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, through the Will
of God, to all the saints who are at Ephesus, and to
2 the faithful in Christ Jesus; Grace to you and Peace
from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, Who hath blessed us with every spiritual
4 blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, as He chose
us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we
should be holy and unspotted, in His sight, in charity.

5 He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children
through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the
6 purpose of His Will, to the praise of the glory of His grace,
7 in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son; in
Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the
remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace,

8 which he hath made to abound exceedingly in us, in
9 all wisdom and prudence, that He might make known
to us the mystery of His Will, according to His good
10 pleasure, which he hath purposed in Him, in the
dispensation of the fulness of times, to re-establish (or,
to gather into one) in Christ, all things that are in
11 heaven and on earth; in Him, *I say*, in Whom we also

are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things according to
12 the counsel of His Will: that we may be unto the praise
13 of His glory, we who before hoped in Christ, in Whom
you also, now that you have heard the Word of Truth,
the gospel of your salvation—in Whom also believing,
14 you were signed with the holy Spirit of promise,
Who is the pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption
of acquisition (or, unto the redemption of God's
own possession), unto the praise of His glory.

15 Wherefore, I also, hearing of your faith that is in the
Lord Jesus, and of your love towards all the saints, cease
16 not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in
17 my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom
18 and of revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes
of your heart (or, understanding) being enlightened,
that you may know what is the hope of His calling,
and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance
19 in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of
His power towards us, who believe, according to the
20 working of the might of His power, which he wrought
in Christ, raising Him up from the dead, and setting
21 Him on His Right Hand, in the heavenly *places*, above
all principality and power, and virtue and dominion, and
every name that is named, not only in this world but
22 also in that which is to come. And he hath put all
things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to
23 be Head over all the Church, which is His body, the
fulness of Him Who is filled all in all (or, Who filleth
all in all).

CHAPTER II

1 AND you, *did He bring to life*, when you were dead
2 in your offences and sins, in which, in time past, ye
walked according to the course of this world, according
to the prince of the power of this air, of the spirit that
3 now worketh on the sons of unbelief, in which also we all
conversed (or, lived) in time past in the desires of our flesh,
fulfilling the will of the flesh, and of *our* thoughts, and
were, by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest :—
4 but God, Who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding
5 charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were
dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ
6 (by Whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us
up together, and hath made us sit together in the
7 heavenly *places*, in Christ Jesus : that in the ages to
come He might show the abundant riches of His grace
8 in goodness towards us in Jesus Christ. For by grace
you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ;
9 for it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man may
10 glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus in (or,* for) good works, which God hath pre-
pared that we should walk in them.
11 Wherefore, remember that ye, being heretofore
Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by
that which is called Circumcision in the flesh, made
12 by hands, (*remember*) that you were at that time without

* Greek *επι*.

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Christ, alienated from the conversation (or, commonwealth) of Israel, and strangers to the testament, having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world.

13 But now, in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were
14 afar off, are made nigh in the Blood of Christ. For
He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and break-
ing down (or, hath broken down) the middle wall of
15 partition, the enmities in His flesh: making void the
law of commandments *contained* in decrees,—that He
might make, in Himself, the two into one new man,
16 making peace,* and might reconcile both to God in one
body by the cross, killing the enmities in Himself.
17 And coming, He preached peace to you who were far
18 off, and peace to them that were nigh; for by Him
19 we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Now
therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners:
but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the
20 household of God, built upon the foundation of the
Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the
21 chief corner stone; in Whom all the building, being
framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the
22 Lord, in Whom ye also are builded together, for a
habitation of God in the Spirit.

CHAPTER III

1 FOR this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ
2 on behalf of you Gentiles,—if yet ye have heard of the

* In the revised English version, verse 15 stands thus: “having abolished in Himself the enmity, *even* the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that He might create in Himself of the twain one new man, *so* making peace.”

dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given me
 3 towards you, how that according to revelation the
 mystery has been made known to me, as I have
 4 written above in few words ; * whereby, when you read,
 you can understand my knowledge in the mystery of
 5 Christ ; which in other generations was not known
 to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy
 6 Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit ; *namely*, that the
 Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body,
 and fellow-partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus,
 7 through the Gospel, of which I am made a minister,
 according to the gift of the grace of GOD, which was
 given to me according to the working of His power.
 8 To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace,
 to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of
 9 Christ ; and to enlighten all men, that they may see
 what is the dispensation of the mystery, which hath
 been hidden from eternity in GOD, Who created all
 10 things ; that *now* the manifold wisdom of God may
 be made known to the principalities and powers in
 11 the heavenly *places* through the Church, according
 to the eternal purpose, which He made in Christ Jesus
 12 our Lord ; in Whom we have boldness and access with
 13 confidence by the faith of Him (or, through our faith in
 Him). Wherefore I pray you not to faint at my tribula-
 tions for you, which is your glory.

14 For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our
 15 Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all paternity in heaven
 16 or on earth is named, that He would grant you, accord-
 ing to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His

* In the revised English version, verse 3 reads thus : "how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery."

17 Spirit with might, unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, that being rooted and 18 founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and 19 height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of GOD.

20 Now to Him Who is able to do all things far more abundantly than we desire (or ask) or understand, according to the power that worketh in us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER IV

1 I, THEREFORE, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation (or, calling) in which 2 you were called, with all humility and meekness, with 3 patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 One body and one Spirit, even as you are called in 5 one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one 6 baptism. One GOD and Father of all, Who is above all, 7 and through all, and in us all. But to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving 8 of Christ. Wherefore he saith,

Ascending on high He led captivity captive, He gave gifts to men.

9 (Now this, that He ascended, what is it, but because He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended above 11 all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He

gave some *to be* Apostles, and some Prophets, and other some Evangelists, and other some Pastors and Doctors, 12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, 13 until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (or, full-grown) man, unto the measure of the age (or, 14 stature) of the fulness of Christ: that henceforth we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie 15 in wait to deceive, but doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him Who is the Head, 16 *even* Christ: from Whom all the Body, being compacted and fitly joined together,* by what every joint supplieth, according to the working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in charity.

17 This then I say and testify in the Lord: that henceforth ye walk not as also the Gentiles walk, in the vanity 18 of their mind, having their understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; 19 who despairing have given themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness, unto covetousness (or, 20 greediness). But you have not so learned Christ, if 21 so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught 22 in Him, as the truth is in Jesus; to put off, according to your former conversation (or, life) the old man, who 23 is corrupted according to the desire of error, and be 24 renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the

* Revised Version "being fitly framed and knit together."

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new man, who according to GOD is created in justice and holiness of truth.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbour, for we are members one 26 of another. Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the 27 sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the 28 devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to 29 him that suffereth need. Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth; but that which is good for the edification of faith, that it may give grace to them that hear. 30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of GOD, whereby you 31 are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger, and clamour and blasphemy, 32 be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another: merciful, forgiving one another, even as GOD hath forgiven you in Christ.

CHAPTER V

1 BE ye therefore followers (or, imitators) of GOD, as 2 most dear children; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation 3 and a sacrifice to GOD for an odour of sweetness. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh 4 saints: or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For know ye this and understand that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person (which is a serving of idols,) hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and

6 of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon
7 the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers
8 with them. For you were heretofore darkness, but now
light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light :
9 for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice,
10 and truth : proving what is well pleasing to God : and
11 have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,
12 but rather reprove them. For the things that are done
13 by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of. But
all things that are reproved, are made manifest by the
14 light : for all, that is made manifest, is light. Wherefore he saith : Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from
the dead ; and Christ shall enlighten thee.

15 See therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly :
16 not as unwise, but as wise : redeeming the time, be-
17 cause the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise,
18 but understanding what is the Will of God. And be
not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury, but be ye filled
19 with the holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms
and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making
20 melody in your hearts to the Lord : giving thanks always
for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
21 to God and the Father. Being subject one to another
in the fear of Christ.

22 Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the
23 Lord. Because the husband is the head of the wife :
as Christ is the head of the Church. He *is* the saviour
24 of His body. Therefore as the Church is subject to
Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in
25 all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also
loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it :

26 that He might sanctify it cleansing it by the laver of
27 water in the word of life. That He might present it
to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or
wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy
28 and without blemish. So also ought men to love their
wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife
29 loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh:
but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth
30 the Church: because we are members of His body,
31 of His flesh, and of His bones. *For this cause shall*
a man leave his father and mother: and shall cleave to
32 *his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.* This is a
great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the
33 Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular
love his wife as himself; and let the wife fear her
husband.

CHAPTER VI

1 CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord, for this
2 is just. *Honour thy father and thy mother*, which is
3 the first commandment with a promise: *that it may*
4 *be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon earth.*
And you fathers, provoke not your children to anger:
but bring them up in the discipline and correction of
the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your lords
according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the
6 simplicity of your heart as to Christ: not serving to
the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants
7 of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart, with a
good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men.
8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall

do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether
9 he be bond, or free. And you masters, do the same
thing to them, forbearing threatenings: knowing, that
the Lord both of them and you is in heaven: and
there is no respect of persons with Him.

10 Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and
11 in the might of His power. Put you on the armour
of God, that you may be able to stand against the
12 deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against
flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers,
against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against
13 the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore
take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able
14 to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things
perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about
with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice,
15 and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel
16 of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, where-
with you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts
17 of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet
of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the
18 word of God). By all prayer and supplication praying
at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching
19 with all instance and supplication for all the saints: and
for me, that speech may be given me, that I may open
my mouth with confidence, to make known the mystery
20 of the gospel. For which I am an ambassador in a
chain, so that therein I may be bold to speak according
as I ought *to speak*.

21 But that you also may know the things that concern
me, *and* what I am doing, Tychicus, my dearest brother
and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to

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22 you all things: whom I have sent to you for this same purpose, that you may know the things concerning us, and that He may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith, from
24 God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace
be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. Amen.

A DEVOUT COMMENTARY

CHAPTER I

THE SALUTATION

1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, through the Will of God, to all* the saints who are at Ephesus,* and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

ST. PAUL begins his Epistle by declaring that he is an Apostle, chosen and sent to preach by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; not by his own merit, nor by the choice of men; but by the Will of God. His enemies had endeavoured to lessen his authority, because he was not one of the original twelve chosen by our Lord; and therefore, here as elsewhere, he distinctly declares that his Apostolate was directly from God and "not of men, neither by man" (Gal. i. 1). He indicates further that no one should presume to enter the ranks of the priesthood or to take upon

* "All." This word is not in the Greek. As to the words "at Ephesus" see the Introduction. The Revised Version retains the words with the marginal note: "Some very ancient authorities omit *at Ephesus*."

himself the sublime office of preaching the Gospel and governing souls, unless he has received a vocation from God, and unless his one purpose is to fulfil the Will of God. If a man is influenced by any lower and more human motive in becoming a priest he cannot say that he has embraced that holy state **through the Will of God**, but rather by his own will, and by the will of the flesh. "They have reigned, but not by Me" (Osee viii. 4).

By the word **saints** St. Paul means Christians, all of whom are called to be saints, have been sanctified in Baptism, and are bound to aim at sanctity. The word "Christian" only occurs three times in the New Testament, and not at all in any Epistle of St. Paul. "Saints" or "the faithful" are the names he applies to the followers of Christ. The three passages in which the word "Christian" occurs are: Acts xi. 26, where St. Luke mentions that it was at Antioch the disciples were first named Christians. He does not say that they called themselves Christians, and perhaps at first the name was one of reproach, though in itself so glorious, and was given to the disciples by Jews and pagans rather than adopted by themselves. This is confirmed by the other passages in which it occurs, for there is certainly an implied sneer in the words of King Agrippa, in spite of his involuntary admiration of St. Paul's eloquence, when he exclaimed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" (Acts xxvi. 28). And when St. Paul admonishes the faithful that no one

should feel ashamed of suffering as a Christian, but should glory in the name, he seems to imply that it was used by externs as a nickname, and with contempt. It would appear, therefore, that the faithful were then called "Christians" in much the same spirit in which Catholics are now called "Papists" and "Romanists," which, though in themselves glorious names, as implying union with the Vicar of Christ, sitting in Peter's Chair, are still intended as terms of reproach, and are often pronounced in a contemptuous tone. We are named "Papists," and well can we say with the first Pope, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a railer or as coveting the goods of others; but if as a *Papist*, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name" (1 Peter iv. 15). How exactly would these words apply to the Catholics during the penal laws!

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, may God our Father, the Fountain of all Godhead and the Author of all spiritual benefits, and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ the Mediator, through Whom the Father giveth all things, bestow upon you grace and peace. Not only from God the Father but through Jesus Christ, without Whom no good things are given. For this reason all the prayers of the Church end with the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord." It will be noticed that St. Paul does not here mention the Holy Ghost, but being the Person uniting the Father and the Son, He is understood in

Them, and He is also understood in the gifts that are peculiarly His own—Grace and Peace. Grace is that daily bread which we so often ask the Father to bestow upon us in the Lord's Prayer. Peace, the effect of grace, is the inheritance we hope for and expect. In this sense St. Augustine writes: "Because we are sons we shall have an inheritance. Now what is that inheritance except peace? 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God'" (com. in Psalm cxxv.). Grace and eternal peace in the sight and possession of God are the highest desires of the Christian soul (comp. Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2).

These two verses form the salutation; the third verse begins the dogmatic part of the Epistle, which consists of the first three chapters and may be thus divided:—

1. Praise of God for all His spiritual blessings in general, and thanksgiving and prayers for the saints (i. 15—ii. 10).

2. Comparison between the miserable state of the heathen converts before their conversion with their happiness in the Church (*vv. 11-22*), the prayer of the Apostle for their confirmation in grace (iii. 1-14), finishing by a doxology.

The first chapter we may thus divide:—

1. St. Paul praises God for the graces given through Jesus Christ: (1) In Him He chose us to be holy; (2) in Him He chose us as adopted children (*v. 5*); (3) gave us grace (*v. 6*); (4) forgave our sins

(v. 7); (5) has filled us with wisdom (v. 8); (6) has made known to us that He has restored all things in Christ (vv. 9-12). All this gratuitously.

2. He exhorts the Ephesians to praise God (v. 13) as partakers in the blessings given through Christ.

3. He prays God to enlighten them to see the grace of their vocation in its true light (vv. 15-19), which is like that which raised Christ from the dead (vv. 20, 21) and made Him Head of the Church (vv. 22, 23).

I. THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

3. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ.**

The words **God and Father** both refer, says St. Jerome, to our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed is the God of that human Nature assumed; and the Father of Him Who in the beginning was with God, "God the Word." In like manner Christ said to St. Mary Magdalen, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (St. John xx. 17). The Apostle here breaks forth into an exclamation of praise to God the Father for the wonderful graces bestowed on the Christian converts of Ephesus. They had remained steadfast in the faith, and had not allowed themselves to be deceived by any false

teacher of the Judaizing faction as the Galatians had ; and so St. Paul, full of joy and thanksgiving, writes not to remonstrate with them or to reprehend them, but to encourage and comfort them. And for what does he thank God ?

Because He has blessed us, His fallen and guilty children, whom, in justice, He might have left in our miserable state of sin, with all spiritual blessings. See the power of the divine blessing or curse. One malediction in Adam brought, in just punishment, all the evils of the world. One blessing in Christ brings down upon those chosen in Him all true blessings. These blessings are true because spiritual, including faith, grace, forgiveness of sin, and future glory. In the Old Testament the blessings promised were temporal, of the earth earthly. "A land flowing with milk and honey ; blessed shall be the fruit of thy ground and the fruit of thy cattle, the droves of thy herds, and the folds of thy sheep, thy barns and thy stores"—these were the rewards promised to those who heard the voice of the Lord God, "to do and keep all His commandments" (Deut. xxviii. 2-6).

But to us Christians the Apostle St. John says : "This is the promise He hath promised us, Life Everlasting" (1 John ii. 25). And our Lord Himself promised to His followers, not worldly prosperity, but persecutions in this world and Life Everlasting in the world to come. Those who place their happiness in mere worldly prosperity, considering

it as the sign of God's approval and its absence as a mark of His anger, make themselves like the carnal-minded Jews. Who would not choose blessings spiritual rather than earthly : eternal rather than passing with time ?

In the heavenly places, that is, in heaven, for there the promises made to us will be fulfilled. The phrase "in heavenly places" occurs five times in this Epistle, and St. Paul does not use it elsewhere. **In Christ**; through our Lord, as Redeemer. (Phil. iii. 20). What could be more valuable than such a blessing ? God Himself bestows it ; its effects are spiritual, and they will be realised to the full in heaven. "Behold thus shall that man be blessed, who feareth the Lord" (Ps. cxxvii. (cxxviii.) 4).

4. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity.

St. Paul is here speaking of our predestination to the grace of faith, which is a perfectly free choice, as St. Augustine teaches against the Pelagians, not from any merit of ours, but merely according to the good pleasure of God. He praises God, therefore, for the goodness with which He thus freely chose us from eternity by an election at once fruitful, for it included grace to be holy, and most gracious, for His love is the reason of His choice. Our Lord Himself declared to His Apostles, "You have not

chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (St. John xv. 16). This inestimable favour of His free choice God bestowed upon us **before the foundation of the world**, that is, from all eternity, "when we were not yet born" (Rom. ix. 11). Why did He choose us? Evidently He could not have chosen us because we were holy, for we did not exist, but He chose us that we might, by His grace, **be holy** by virtues, and **unspotted**, or unblemished, by purity from sin; not by our merits, either actual or foreseen, but out of pure mercy on account of the merits of Christ. This holiness was to be real, true, genuine; for it was to be **in His sight**, that is in the heart which He alone can see. Compare the words of God to Samuel; "man seeth those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kings xvi. 7).

"In this world were we made, and yet before the world was made, we were chosen! Unspeakable wonder! Who can explain this, nay, who can conceive it? They who are not, are chosen; yet He who chooses neither errs in His choice, nor chooses in vain! He chooses and He has His elect whom He will afterwards create to be chosen; but He has them in Himself, not indeed in His Nature, but in His foreknowledge. Therefore, be not puffed up; we are men, He made us. We are faithful, even faithful, yea, also just, for the just liveth by faith. He made us and not we ourselves" (St. Aug.). Notice that we are chosen in order that we may, by God's grace, **be holy and unspotted**; but many

that are thus chosen are not, many at Ephesus were not, actually holy ; so that the effects of the election are conditional on our co-operation with God's grace. In His choice is included the grace necessary to be holy, if we allow Him to act ; but our free co-operation is necessary.

In charity : lastly, we are called to be holy by the exercise of charity, of love to God and our neighbour, for charity is the bond of perfection, and the fulfilling of the law. We are not, as Christians, called in the spirit of bondage and fear, driven only by the fear of punishment, but in the spirit of love, by which we are to call God our Father.*

5, 6. He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself ; according to the purpose of His Will : unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son.†

The meaning of these verses is that God hath predestinated us, that is, hath chosen us gratuitously,

* Drach remarks that this passage destroys the Protestant doctrine of faith without works, and that sins forgiven are not really effaced, but only covered, and that our righteousness is not real, but only imputed ; for, first we have been called not only to the faith, but also to live a holy life without stain ; and this, secondly, "in His sight," that is, really.

† St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, Estius, Drach, Van Steenkiste, and others join the words "in charity" in verse 4 with verse 5, and read : "In His charity He hath predestinated us to be adopted as His children," etc.

by the eternal design and purpose of His Will, to be His own adopted children through the merits of Jesus Christ. The reason of this predestination is that we may give praise and glory to Him in order that His goodness and charity may be displayed. "This," says St. Augustine, "He did, by the good pleasure of His Will, that no one might glory as if it belonged to him by right, but only in the good will of God to him. This he did according to the riches of His grace and the good pleasure of His Will, which He hath purposed to show forth in His beloved Son" (*De Pred. SS.* 18-37). The deep mystery of predestination and grace, hidden from our understanding in the brightness of God's uncreated light, is far above our comprehension. "Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon the earth; and with labour do we find the things that are before us. But the things that are in heaven, who shall search out? And who shall know Thy thought, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy holy Spirit from above!" (*Wisd. ix.* 16).

St. Thomas will be our guide in the explanation of this verse, containing so many mysteries and suggesting such wide fields of thought.

Predestination means that God, by His grace and goodness alone, chose us beforehand, **unto the adoption of children**, that is, to be associated by Baptism with the other children He had adopted, and to have a share in the spiritual blessings they possess. This adoption is effected by making us members of the

mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Who, by Nature, has the very plenitude of Sonship, being the only Begotten of the Father. We become in Him, and by union with Him, the adopted sons of God.* The Apostle therefore adds **through Jesus Christ**, in order to show the Mediator by Whom the adoption was accomplished (Gal. iv. 4, 5).

Unto Himself: these words express the likeness and conformity we have to the Son of God, which is greater or less in proportion to the spirit in which we serve Him. We must understand that there is a twofold likeness to the Son of God in the adopted children of God; one is imperfect and in part, the other perfect and complete. The imperfect is by grace in this world; the perfect is by glory in the next life. The present likeness to Christ in us is imperfect in two ways; both because it is only in the soul and does not extend to the body, and also because the reformation of the soul itself is only in part and not complete and entire. "We know in part," says St. Paul, speaking of our present state (1 Cor. xiii. 9).

But the future likeness and conformity to the Son of God, for which we hope, will be perfect. To that we can only attain in the glory of heaven, of which it is said, "We know that, when He shall appear,

* One day St. Lewis Bertrand had been contemplating this wonderful truth, and quite overcome by the mystery of God's loving mercy, he could do nothing for some time except repeat over and over again, "We can be the Sons of God! We can be the Sons of God!"

we shall be like Him" (1 John iii. 2). It will be perfect because it will extend to the body as well as the soul, "He will reform the body of our lowness" (Phil. iii. 21), and also because the likeness in the soul will be complete, according to the words, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is imperfect will be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10). When, therefore, St. Paul writes, **He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children**, we may refer the words to the imperfect likeness to the Son of God which by grace we possess here, and also, which is better, to that perfect likeness to Him which we hope for in the glory of heaven. Of this perfect adoption St. Paul says, "We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, [the imperfect adoption] groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the Sons of God, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23).

According to the purpose of His Will. If we seek the cause of our predestination, and ask why did God predestinate us to be His adopted children, we must acknowledge at once that there could not be any necessity on the part of God, and that on our part there could be no right to this supreme favour. God is sovereign above all, and is absolutely free; He wills what He pleases, and what He pleases must be right. On our part, when He predestinated us we did not yet exist, and nothingness can have no rights. The Apostle then thanks God for predestinating us **according to the purpose of His Will**, that is from pure love, for predestination in the

order of ideas presupposes election, and election presupposes love.

St. Paul then proceeds to assign a twofold cause of this immense benefit of God.

1. The first is called the *efficient* cause, that is, the cause that really makes the effect to be what it is; and this can be nothing but God's sovereign and free Will, **according to the purpose of His Will**. There is nothing external to Himself to move His Will; but "of His own Will hath he begotten us by the word of truth" (James i. 18).

2. The second is called the *final* cause, that is the end or object God had in view in what He did. This end was that we, His creatures, might know and glorify His goodness, **unto the praise and glory of His grace**. Another reason, then, for thanking and praising God is on account of the dignity and the excellence of the service we are created to render Him. The efficient cause, therefore, of our predestination is the Will of God; the meritorious cause is our Lord Jesus Christ. Now although the Will of God has not any real cause, but is Itself the first Cause of all, still in a certain sense some reason may be assigned for it. This may be in two ways.

First, if we consider God Himself, Who wills, we may say, in a certain sense, that the reason of the Divine Will is His Goodness, which is the object of His Will and moves it to act; as the Holy Ghost says, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi. 4).

Secondly, if we consider the object willed we may assign something created as the reason, in a certain measure, of the Divine Will; as when God wills to crown Peter in heaven because he has fought rightly. The following explanation will make the matter more clear. If we look at a series of things, one of which is the cause of the other, we may say, in a certain sense, that one of these things is the reason of that other thing which is willed by God. For example, a man has two hands; if we ask why God willed him to have these hands, we may answer that it was that his hands might be the instruments of his reason, and that He wills him to have reason because He wills him to be man, and He wills him to be man to perfect the universe. Here we must stop, because we have come to the first effect of God's Will; and we can only say that God willed the universe because it was His will and good pleasure. In like manner no reason can be assigned on the part of the creature why a man is predestinated, but only on the part of the Creator, and that reason is His own free will. For the effects of predestination are twofold, namely, grace and glory. Now, as in the example given above, so here we may in a certain sense say that one of these is the cause of the other, that God wills. For He wills to bring Peter to glory because he has fought rightly, and he has rightly fought because he had grace. But here we must stop. No reason can be assigned why Peter had grace, except that such was the Will

of God: no reason on the part of man can be given for his predestination, for this would be to affirm that the first beginning of a good, supernatural act came from man, and not from God, which is the Pelagian heresy. So it follows that the reason of predestination is the simple Will of God, and this St. Paul teaches in the words, **according to the purpose of His Will** (*vide* St. Thomas *in loco*).

Unto the praise and glory of His grace. God, as already said, wills all things and carries them into effect on account of His own goodness. This is not, however, meant in the sense that God does things to secure any good for Himself, for being infinite in all things He lacks nothing, and of Him it is said, "Thou hast no need of my goods," but He does them in order to communicate His goodness to those things He has created. God enriches rational creatures with the gifts of His goodness, in order that knowing His goodness they may praise and glorify Him, as He reveals in the words, "Every one that calleth upon My Name, I have created for My glory" (Isa. xlivi. 7). In like manner St. Paul says in this verse that we are predestinated in order to praise and glorify His grace. "To glorify God," says Augustine, "is to give Him thanks." "When He glorifies us," says the same holy Father, "He makes us glorious: when we glorify Him, it profits us, not Him. How then do we glorify Him? By acknowledging Him to be glorious, not by adding to His glory" (Serm. xviii. 5, and in Ps. xxxix.).

56 THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

We should notice that the words used by the Apostle are **of His grace**, not of *His justice*, because there is no question here of justice. Justice implies some debt to be paid, or some right to be acknowledged ; but God owes nothing ; we had no right to our creation or to grace. To be predestinated to the adoption of sons is not a right of justice, but a pure grace freely given. Nor does St. Paul content himself with saying **to the praise of His glory**, but adds, **of His grace**, as if he called it *His glorious grace*, or the grace that gives Him glory. From this we see the immensity of this grace which we understand better by considering the glory which will be given us by God, and which will correspond to it, if we persevere. The greatness of the grace or favour is also seen when we remember that not only had we no right to claim it, but, on the contrary, there was much that rendered us positively undeserving of it, as St. Paul indicates in the words, "God commended His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us," and "when we were enemies, we were reconciled with God" (Rom. v. 8-10).

2. HE SHOWS THAT GRACE HAS BEEN FREELY BESTOWED ON US IN CHRIST, BY WHOSE BLOOD WE HAVE BEEN REDEEMED

In which He hath graced us in His beloved Son.
Graced us ; that is, hath made us pleasing to Himself that we might be worthy of His love. Estius,

Corn. à Lapide, and Bisping see in these words a refutation of the Protestant error that holiness is not real in us, but only imputed. The Apostle here uses the same word that occurs in Luke i. 28.

Through Christ, in Christ, and on account of Christ we have received grace ; and thus only in His beloved Son are we acceptable to God.

Through Christ ; that is, through His mediation, merits, priesthood, and sacrifice.

In Christ, as members of His Body, receiving Spirit and Life from Him Who is our Head.

On account of Christ ; that is, in order that His mystical Body might grow and be perfected. God loved us from eternity, not on account of ourselves, but in Him Who is loved for His own sake by His Father. Therefore it is said **in His beloved Son**, for Whose sake He loves us, inasmuch as we are like Him, and belong to Him. For love is founded on likeness ; and the Son is, by Nature, like the Father, for He has one and the same Nature with the Father. He is therefore beloved principally, and for His own sake, with the most natural and excellent love. We, God's adopted children, participate in this divine love in proportion to our likeness and conformity to the Son of God. "He hath translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 13 ; Rom. viii. 29).

7-10. In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He hath made to abound exceedingly in us in all wisdom and prudence, that He might make known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to re-establish in Christ all things that are in heaven and on earth, in Him.

These four verses are irregular in structure, the sacred Author, burning with the fire of his fervid thoughts, being carried away by his vehement sense of the benefits we have received in Christ. The sentences are strung together by relatives, so that the regular sequence is somewhat disturbed.

In Whom we have redemption through His Blood. In the beloved Son of God, by the outpouring of His Blood, we are redeemed from sin and hell; the first grand effect of this copious redemption being **the remission of our sins.** What more wonderful than to remember that the Blood of God Incarnate has been shed for us! Nothing could give us a deeper conviction of the evil of sin, the value of our souls, and the surpassing love of God.

Two things are opposed to the justifying grace of God, by which is meant that grace which makes us holy: (1) the stain or guilt of sin; (2) the consequent separation from God, which is the punishment of sin. From both hath Jesus Christ saved us.

We will consider the second obstacle first. Sin destroys in the human soul the likeness of God, and without this likeness, which is the reflection in a certain manner of His own Countenance, man cannot be pleasing to God. But Jesus Christ restores within man's soul the lost likeness to God, and takes away the punishment of separation from Him. This He effected by shedding His own Blood. "You were not redeemed," writes St. Peter, "with corruptible things, as gold or silver . . . but with the precious Blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18). St. John also tells us that in heaven he saw the blessed "falling down before the Lamb," with their harps and golden vials while they sung, "Thou hast redeemed us to God in Thy Blood" (Apoc. v. 9). But not only has our Lord delivered us from the punishment due to sin as its penalty; but He has done so by gaining for us true forgiveness of the guilt of sin, for He is the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the world (John i. 29).

According to the riches of His grace. The abundant riches of His grace are manifested above all in this fact, that for our sakes He did not spare even His own Son. Thus does He honour our human nature, delivering man from sin through the death of His Son, as if it were not by grace but in justice. For in Him, as the members of His Body, we can claim from God, if we truly repent, the complete pardon of our sins. How truly gracious and rich in mercy is God our Father.

Which (grace) He hath made to abound exceedingly in us, in all wisdom and prudence. God having opened His riches has poured forth grace upon us with boundless liberality. Wisdom and prudence, as far as they are supernatural gifts, are effects of grace. By wisdom we are enlightened ; by prudence guided. Wisdom enables us to see the great principles of spiritual life ; prudence makes us understand what to do in practical matters of daily life ; for instance, how we can avoid danger of sin as well as actual evil ; what good works we should undertake, and how we should perform them. These gifts are particularly necessary for priests who have to instruct and guide others ; and therefore it is a duty to pray that the divine Head of the Church may send pastors after His own Heart, whose mouths may be so full of wisdom that the enemies of the faith may not be able to resist them, and whose light may shine before men for the glory of God. "I will give you pastors after my own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine" (Jer. iii. 15 ; Luke xxi. 15).

That He might make known to us the mystery of His Will. Grace has been abundantly given that God may reveal to us His secret design concerning the redemption and salvation of man. This was God's mystery, or secret, that had long lain hidden under the figures of the Old Law, and the obscure sayings of the prophets. This mystery, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in

Him, He hath now revealed and proclaimed by the Apostles, both to Jews and Gentiles, not through their merit, but His own good pleasure. By His good will towards us, He determined that, **in the dispensation of the fulness of times**, that is, when the time He had fixed had arrived, He would establish,* or sum up into one, **in Christ**, as the Head, **all things in heaven and earth**. What original sin had separated Christ again united. The Apostle does not mean to assert that Christ died for the angels, He died for men, and by saving them, united them to the angels in heaven. The redemption was God's secret. No one could have imagined so marvellous a mystery of love, unless God had revealed His Will. "The things that are of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11; cf. Matt. xi. 25; Col. i. 26). God had fixed in His wisdom the time of the coming of Christ, Who has fulfilled all that went before, the promises made to the patriarchs, the figures of the law, the oracles of the prophets. He is the Redeemer, the Life of the dead, the Establisher of grace, the Bond between God and man, the summing up of all in one.

* The Latin word here translated by the word "establish" is *instaurare*. St. Jerome has "recapitulare vel in unum redigere," and this is the force of the Greek word. The English revised version has "to sum up all things."

11, 12. **In Whom also we are called by lot,* being predestinated according to the purpose of Him, Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His Will; that we may be unto the praise of His glory, we who before hoped in Christ.**

We must not imagine from these words that there was any element of chance in our election; but we must understand that we were made the **lot**, that is, the inheritance of God, in Christ, according to the hidden and most holy purpose of His Will. Some writers consider that the words **by lot** mean that in Christ we receive the right to the celestial inheritance as it were by lot, because we ourselves have as little to do with our first election as we should have had if it had been actually by lot. But St. Ambrose and St. Jerome and others understand the words to mean that we were brought into the lot of children, and to a share in the inheritance of God, and this by the counsel of God's Will. An inheritance was called "a lot," because it was often settled by lot among several claimants. The promised land was divided by lot among the twelve tribes (Josue xv.), and perhaps St. Paul had this in his mind in writing the verse. So in Colossians i. 12, he says that "God hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints."

* Mr. Conybeare translates these words "In Whom we also receive the portion of our lot," and he notes that the literal translation of the Greek would be "were portioned with our lot" (*Life of St. Paul, chap. xxv.*).

Why one is called and another is not called, why Saul from among the Jewish persecutors and not another, who can tell? Do not inquire, says St. Augustine, if you do not desire to fall into error. God only knows. **He worketh all things according to the counsel of His Will**, and we can only cry out, as we prostrate ourselves in adoration, "Who among men can know the counsel of God" (Wisd. ix. 13), and with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 33; see also Isaias xl. 13, etc.). All we can say is, that as no one merited this election, no one is injured in their rights by not being chosen. This will be more evident by an illustration. If a rich man has two creditors and chooses to pay one and not the other, he does an injustice. If he sees two poor men in equal necessity and gives a free alms to one, by choosing that one, he does the other no injury, because neither have a right to his bounty. Still more plain is it that if he elected to adopt one as his own son and to leave him his property under certain conditions, he would do no injury to the right of others whom he does not adopt. God owes election to the faith and to the state of grace and to the supernatural adoption of sons to no one. When He chooses one and not another, He violates no one's right. But if we ask

why He does so, the only possible answer is, because it is His Will. Further than this we must not endeavour to ascertain, "for he that is a searcher of Majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory" (Prov. xxv. 27). We must never dare to call the Almighty to account for what He does.

As we have the benefit of election to the grace of faith without any merit on our part, "we must labour the more that by good works we may make our vocation and election sure" (2 Peter i. 10). We ought to pray without ceasing, that we may persevere in the way of His commandments, and **that we may be to the praise of His glory, we who have before hoped in Christ.** We Jews, says St. Paul, were the chosen people, who, knowing the prophets, hoped in Christ before He came; of our race were the first converts, so that, as the firstfruits of the Church, we, before others, gave Him praise and glory.

3. BENEFITS GIVEN SPECIALLY TO THE EPHESIAN CONVERTS

13, 14. In whom you also (hoped), after you had heard the word of truth, (the gospel of your salvation) in whom also believing you were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of acquisition, unto the praise of His glory.

There is an opposition between the **we** of verse 12 and the **you also** of verse 13, **we** applying to the

Jewish converts, **you also** to those who had been Gentiles. We must supply the word "hoped" from the last sentence.

These two verses speak of the benefits bestowed on the converts from the Gentiles or heathens. These benefits are threefold: (1) the benefit of preaching, (2) of conversion to the Faith, (3) of justification.

1. Concerning the benefit of preaching, St. Paul says to them: **In Christ you also hoped when you had heard the word of truth preached to you.**

The blessing of hearing the word of truth came to **you** also, who formerly were heathens, as well as to **us** who were Jews, by the goodness and power of Christ; for it was Christ Himself Who sent you preachers (Rom. x. 14). The Apostle then praises the word that was preached to them, calling it (a) **the word of truth**, (b) **the Gospel**, or good tidings, (c) **Salvation**.

(a) It is called the **word of truth** because it comes from Christ Who is Truth. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (St. John xiv. 6); "Thy word is Truth" (St. John xvii. 17).

(b) It is the **Gospel** or Good Tidings, because it announces the highest good, Life Eternal, and shows how we are to reach it (Isa. lii. 7, etc.).

(c) It is **Salvation**, because by believing and following the word preached to them they will be saved from sin and misery here; and in the next life from eternal misery and death (Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 2).

2. Of the second benefit, that of conversion to

the true faith, St. Paul says, **In Whom** (Christ) **you also believing**. Faith is necessary for those who have the word of God preached to them. In vain does a man hear truth if he refuses to believe ; but to believe with supernatural faith comes from Christ ; for, as St. Paul says further on, we are saved by faith, and not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God.

3. Of the third benefit, justification, St. Paul tells them that they were **signed with the Holy Spirit of promise** ; and in these words calls the Holy Spirit **(a) a sign, (b) the Spirit of promise, (c) the pledge of our inheritance**.

(a) He is a **sign**, inasmuch as through Him there is poured into our hearts Charity, by which we are distinguished from those who are not the Children of God, and therefore, says St. Paul, you are signed, that is, marked out, and distinguished from the flock of the devil. In another passage he exhorts them not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, "whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." As men mark their own sheep to distinguish them from other flocks, so our Lord, the Good Shepherd, signs His own flock, that is His people, with a spiritual mark. In the Old Testament the Lord had a peculiar people, the Jews, of whom it was said, "You, My flocks, the flocks of My pasture, are men" ; and, again, "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Ezek. xxxiv. 31, and Ps. lxxviii. 13). But because this flock was fed on corporal pastures, that is, doctrine regarding bodily and material welfare,

and by temporal promises such as "if you will hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land," therefore the Lord marked them with an outward and bodily sign and mark, that of circumcision, which separated and distinguished them from others. "My covenant," said God to Abraham, "shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant" (Gen. xvii. 13). On the other hand, in the New Testament, the flock of God is the Christian people (1 Peter ii. 25, and John x. 14), and this flock is fed on spiritual pastures, that is, on spiritual doctrine; and the rewards promised are also spiritual; and therefore God has distinguished them from others by a spiritual mark or sign. Now, the Holy Spirit, Who is Love, is given to a man when he is made a true lover of God and his neighbour, as St. Paul teaches in the Epistle to the Romans v. 5. The spiritual sign, therefore, or mark that distinguishes God's children is Charity, according to the words of our Lord, "In this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii. 35).

(b) In the second place the Holy Ghost is called **the Spirit of Promise** for three reasons.

(a) Because He was promised by the Prophets to the followers of Christ: "I will put a new Spirit into you"; "I will put My Spirit into you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 27, and xxxvii. 14).

(β) Because when God bestows upon us His Holy Spirit, the Gift is accompanied with the promise

of an eternal inheritance. For by the Holy Spirit we are made the sons of God, and the promise of life eternal is given us because we are the "sons of God"; therefore our promised inheritance comes from the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 17).

(γ) The Holy Ghost is the pledge of our inheritance, inasmuch as He makes us certain, by His present gifts, of our future inheritance. He is the Spirit of Promise, therefore, because by giving us now the spirit of adoption and making us sons of God, He Himself becomes the sign and pledge of the life promised hereafter.

The words **unto the redemption of acquisition**, or of the purchased possession, show us the reason why we are signed with the Holy Spirit. For just as when a man adds new sheep to his flock he marks them with a sign to show that he has purchased them as his own, so Christ having purchased us with His own Blood (Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 20), and made us a "purchased people" (1 Peter ii. 9), has impressed upon us a spiritual mark to show that we are His property and possession. And, moreover, we are "purchased by redemption," because we have not been bought as if we had never before belonged to God, but redeemed as having once been God's property carried away into slavery by the devil, and now having our freedom once more purchased for us by the Blood of Christ. Christ, then, has purchased us by redemption, not as though He thus enriched God, Who needs not us: "If thou do justly, what

shalt thou give Him? or what shall He receive at thy hand?" (Job xxxv. 7). But He purchased us for the **praise of His glory**, that is, in order that God may be for ever praised and glorified for His Infinite Mercy. "Every one that calleth on My Name, him have I chosen for My Glory" (Isa. xliii. 7). The words **to the praise of His glory**, says St. John Chrysostom (Hom. ii. in *Ephesians*), give us the utmost confidence. If it were on our account that God did this, our sense of unworthiness might make us doubt. But if it be for His own sake, and in order to display His goodness, we have no ground for misgiving. The same thing is said in various places to the Israelites; for example, Psalm cviii. 21, "But Thou, O Lord, my Lord, deal with me for Thy Name's sake." In many other passages the same phrase is employed; and thus a reason for unshaken hope is supplied.

4. ST. PAUL GIVES THANKS FOR THE PAST BENEFITS GIVEN TO THE EPHESIANS, AND PRAYS FOR MORE

15, 16. Wherefore I also hearing of your faith that is in the Lord Jesus, and of your love towards all the Saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making commemoration of you in my prayers.

From the fact that St. Paul says he has heard of the faith of those he was addressing, some have doubted whether this letter was written to the Ephesians, who without question were his own con-

verts. But there seems to be nothing solid in the objection; for St. Paul does not say that he has heard of their conversion, but of their faith, which, as he had been absent for a considerable time, can without the least difficulty be understood of perseverance in the faith.

We learn from verse 15 that charity and good works are the signs of the true life of faith, for without them faith is idle, useless, and dead. As we judge of the vitality of the body from the pulse, so can we estimate the life of faith by the amount and energy of charity and good works.

St. Paul also here implies that faith and charity are gifts of God's grace. We thank God for gifts bestowed by His mercy, and we should have no need to thank Him if they were our own by right, or could be acquired by our own efforts. Nor need we pray for them, if without God we could have them. "Prayer," says St. Augustine, "is the most clear witness to grace. What more foolish than to pray that we may be able to do what we can do of ourselves?"

Moreover, St. Paul teaches us that we ought to thank God for the good that others have received from Him, as well as to pray for them, especially in the case of Pastors giving thanks for their flock.

I cease not. "Never was anything equal to the yearnings of the Apostle; never anything like the sympathy and the affectionateness of the blessed Paul, who made his prayer in behalf of whole cities

and peoples, and writes the same to all, I thank my God for you, making mention of you in my prayers. Think how many he had in his mind, whom it were a labour so much as to remember ; how many he made mention of in his prayers, giving thanks to God for them all, as though he himself had received the greatest blessing" (St. John Chrys., Hom. iii. in *Eph.*, Oxford Trans. Compare Rom. i. 9; 1 Cor. i. 4; Phil. i. 3, 4, etc.).

17, 18. **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know what the hope is of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.**

The Father of glory means the author of glory, and of our glorious redemption in Christ. In Hebrew the word Father often stands for Author or Producer, *e.g.* Job xxxviii. 28, "Who is the Father of the rain ?" that is, the one whose power causes the rain. St. Paul has no name, says St. John Chrysostom, by which he may represent the mysteries and secrets of which we are partakers, so he calls them **glory**, "which is in fact with us the name and appellation of every kind of magnificence."

The Apostle here prays that God would vouchsafe to pour out on the Ephesians two of the gifts of the

Holy Ghost, wisdom and knowledge. God alone can give true wisdom: "Who shall know Thy thought unless Thou give wisdom, and Thy Holy Spirit from above?" (Wisd. ix. 17). He also asks that the gift of knowledge may be bestowed on them, calling it the spirit of revelation, in order that they might have an exalted idea of God's goodness to them. The light necessary to see supernatural truths comes from God, the Father of Light, and therefore we should earnestly pray for it, remembering that the "sensual (or natural) man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The eyes of your heart. The heart, both in the Old and New Testament, often means not only the affections, but also the thought or the intellectual powers (Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21; Exod. xxxi. 6; Rom. i. 21, etc.). He prays therefore that their minds may be enlightened by the gifts of wisdom and understanding that they may see the immense dignity to which they are called. By the gift of understanding the Holy Ghost not only enables the soul to realise more clearly to what we are called, but bestows upon us a firm hope of attaining to our supernatural end, and raises us up to aspire to union with God as His adopted children. This hope is the "anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb. vi. 19). The Apostle's desire is that we may know more fully and perfectly how truly wonderful are those blessings we hope for in Christ; how rich, how magnificent is the inherit-

ance of heavenly glory promised by God to the saints, that is, to all Christians who live according to the teaching and example of Christ. When the eyes of the heart are thus enlightened, a man will gladly give up all for God.

The exaltation of Christ is the pattern of ours.

19, 21. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power* towards us, who believe according to the operation of the might of His power, which He hath wrought in Christ, raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him on His right hand in heavenly places, above all principality and power and virtue and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

I pray also, says St. Paul, that the Father of Light may enlighten you to understand the supreme excellence of that power by which God, operating according to the might of His power, makes us believe, yet leaves our liberty intact. The wonderful power of God towards us, who believe according to the operation of the might of His power, is also proved

* *Greatness of His power, etc.* St. John Chrysostom, and after him Cornelius à Lapide, places the comma after the word "believe," thus joining it with the preceding words, and explaining it all of the power God displays in calling us to the faith. But, writes Drach, the next verse shows it should be understood of the power exhibited in the Resurrection. This is the reading of St. Thomas, Cajetan, Estius, Bisping, and others.

from the fact that He enables so vast a multitude to believe truths so difficult and so far removed above human reason, and to believe them so firmly that they are willing to sacrifice everything the world can give, yea, life itself, for the truth of God's faith, and in hope of the eternal though invisible Life He has promised.

How exceeding great and worthy of all praise is that power which, without taking away the liberty of the will of man, yet by its mighty operation makes a good will where there was malice, an obedient will where there was stubborn resistance, and loving hearts out of enemies.

In verse 20 the Apostle proceeds to speak of the power displayed by God in the supreme exaltation of Christ as Man; and brings this as a proof of the mighty things which that same power can, and if we are faithful, will do for us, vile and miserable as of ourselves we are. The righteousness of Christ is the model or pattern of ours; and so also His glory and exaltation indicate to us what ours will be. For He is our Head, we His Members. So, says the Apostle, according to the operation of the might of His power which He wrought in Christ, will He also exalt us (cf. Phil. iii. 21). In many other places are we taught that we shall become participants in the glory of Christ. For instance, "If we suffer with Him *it is* that we may be also glorified with Him" (Rom. viii. 17).

Then St. Paul proceeds to describe the exaltation

of Christ as Man, by the might of His Father's power, and mentions three points:—

1. His passage from death to life.
2. His exaltation to the highest glory.
3. The highest degree of power being bestowed upon Him.

1. **Raising Him up from the dead.** Christ, as God, raised Himself from the dead, as He Himself declared, saying, “I lay down My life that I may take it again . . . I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again” (John x. 17, 18). But as Man, Christ owed the glory of His Resurrection to the power of His Father. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead be with you, He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will quicken also your mortal bodies” (Rom. viii. 11).

2. **Setting Him on His right hand.** The glory and exaltation of Christ, as Man, may be considered under three different points of view, mentioned here by the Apostle, namely: (a) in relation to God; (b) in relation to created things in the material world; (c) in relation to spiritual created natures.

(a) In relation to God, the glory bestowed upon Christ, as Man, consists in this, that the Father has set Him at His own right hand (compare Col. iii. 1; Heb. x. 12; 1 Peter iii. 22). This expression, familiar to us in the Creeds and *Te Deum*, is of course metaphorical, implying that Christ, in His Human Nature, possesses in heaven the highest

possible participation in the attributes of the God-head. He promises the same, in a certain measure, to us His members in those magnificent words: "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne: as I also have overcome, and have sat down with My Father, in His throne" (Apoc. iii. 21). As God, the glory of Christ is manifestly equal to that of the Father, for they are the same in Nature.

(b) In relation to created things of the material world it is said that our Lord, as Man, is raised into **the heavenly places**. As, says St. Thomas, the heavenly bodies hold the highest place in relation to other bodies, this expression implies that He is exalted above every created material thing (Eph. iv. 10).

(c) In relation to created spiritual natures, St. Paul says, in verse 21, that Christ, as Man, is exalted "above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion"; and further, above "every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." He therefore declares that Christ, as Man, is exalted above every other created spiritual nature in general.

Out of the nine choirs of Angels, the Apostle here mentions four by name—the Principalities, Powers, Virtues, and Dominions. Above these are the Cherubim and Seraphim and Thrones; below, the Archangels and Angels.

The reason St. Thomas assigns for the mention of

these four particular choirs* is that their names express the dignity of their offices in the world of creation, and the Apostle desires to show that Christ, as Man, is exalted above the whole of creation, and all those of whatever rank or dignity that rule in creation. Further, the Apostle says in general terms that Christ is exalted above **every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come**, meaning that not only was He, as Man, raised above the particular choirs just specified, but above every other created spiritual nature, whether their names are already known to us here, or will only be revealed to us in the life to come. The Divine Nature is not included in those things that are named either here or hereafter.

Our present knowledge, feeble and limited as it is, enables us to understand many of God's works, to name and classify them; but how immense must be the multitude of things about which we have

* There is a slight variation of order in the names of the nine choirs in the works of Dionysius and St. Gregory. The former, or the author of the works under his name, enumerates them thus:—

First Hierarchy,	(1) Seraphim,	(2) Cherubim,	(3) Thrones.
Second , ,	(4) Dominations,	(5) Virtues,	(6) Powers.
Third , ,	(7) Principalities,	(8) Archangels,	(9) Angels.

This order agrees with the text under consideration.

St. Gregory enumerates them thus:—

I.	. . .	(1) Seraphim,	(2) Cherubim,	(3) Thrones.
II.	. . .	(4) Dominations,	(5) Principalities,	(6) Powers.
III.	. . .	(7) Virtues,	(8) Archangels,	(9) Angels.

This order is founded on Colossians i. 16.

no kind of knowledge whatever, and therefore cannot even name. Even if we were able to bring every science to perfection, after the telescope, microscope, and every other instrument of scientific research had revealed all their wonders, we should even then be obliged to say, This is but the beginning of His ways. We see but one ray of His light. For, however far human science may progress, it will always remain true that in this mortal life "we know only in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul . . . and hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon the earth; and with labour do we find out the things that are before us. But the things that are in heaven, who shall search out?" (Wisd. ix. 16). If, then, we are now justly astounded at the marvels that science unfolds, what will be the ecstasy of our minds when "that which is perfect is come"; when we see no longer "through a glass in a dark manner, but face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), in the full light of the Face of God, in that city that needs not the light of the sun, "for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (Apoc. xxi. 23). Of such wonders did St. Paul speak when he tells us that in heaven he heard "secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 4). In like manner St. Thomas Aquinas towards the end of his life was favoured with a marvellous rapture during Mass, after which he wrote no more. Being asked the reason, he replied, "After what I have seen all

I have written or could write appears to me as nothing."

Above all these secret things, Christ, as Man, has been exalted: "He hath given Him a Name that is above all names" (Phil. ii. 9).

22, 23. And He hath subjected all things under His feet, and hath made Him head over all His Church, which is His Body, and the fulness of Him Who is filled all in all* (compare Ps. viii. 8).

Here St. Paul repeats that Christ, in His human nature, has been raised to the highest possible power and dominion, first over all created things in general, and then over the Church in particular.

God the Father hath made all, angels and men, good and bad, animate and inanimate—in fact, every created thing subject to the power, rule, and sway of our Lord, as Man. **He hath put all things under His feet** may be taken simply as a figurative expression of the complete subjection of all things to the authority of Christ, as nothing can be more under our power than what we trample upon with our feet. Of this our Lord spoke when He said, "All power is given to Me in Heaven, and upon earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18; comp. Heb. ii. 8). Or the phrase **under His feet** may be understood metaphori-

* The R.V. has: "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

cally to denote that all things are subjected to Christ, not only as God, but also as Man. The feet are the lowest part of the body and the head the highest, and though the divine and human natures in Christ are not like parts of a material body, still, by a metaphor, the divine nature can be called the head—"The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. xi. 3)—and the human nature can be metaphorically called the feet. Thus understood, the words would mean that God the Father has subjected all things to Christ as Man.

All things indeed, but in different ways; some willingly, others unwillingly. Origen argued from this passage against eternal punishment: he contended that those that are subject to Christ are saved; and the Apostle declares that all things will be subject to Christ, therefore all will be saved. The answer to this sophism is that salvation depends on the way in which we are subject to Christ. If willingly, by love, He is our salvation; if unwillingly, to the glory of His justice, we shall be lost. The righteous who in this life subject themselves to Christ and do His Will, in the next life will be subject to Him that He may in all things fulfil their will and desire, as the Holy Ghost says, "To the just their desire shall be given" (Prov. x. 24.) But others will be subjected under His feet, as criminals before their judge, that God's just will may be done in them (comp. Luke xix. 27).

He hath made Him Head over all His Church.

Here St. Paul proceeds to describe the peculiar subjection of the Church to Christ, as the body to the head. He is Head of all the Church, both militant and triumphant. He is Head of the angels as well as of men in the sense of being pre-eminently exalted, in His human nature, above them all, and as being the source of grace communicated to them ; but as far as the title "Head" implies conformity of nature, Christ is not Head of the angels but only of men, for He assumed not the angelic but human nature. "To which of the angels has He said at any time, Thou art my Son ?" (Heb. i. 5 ; Ps. ii. 7).

The Church is the Body of Christ, because it is subject to Him as the body is to the head ; because it receives divine influence from Him, as the bodily members receive vital movement from the brain, and die instantly if separated from the head ; because in nature it is conformed to Christ, as Man, as the head is the same nature as the body (Rom. xii. 4, 5 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12).

How can the Church be called **the fulness of Christ** ? Is not Christ, it may be objected, full of all perfection without the Church ; is it not He Who imparts to the Church all her perfection ? To answer this difficulty we must consider the relation of a body to its head. Certainly the body without the head cannot live, but the head is not complete without the body. As the different members, eye, hand, foot, are necessary to complete the body, they are necessary for the head that its office may be perfectly

exercised. If we change the metaphor slightly and consider the soul as head, or moving principle of the bodily members, then, as the body is made for the soul, it may be said to complete the soul, which would not be Man without it.

In like manner with Christ and the Church. As the Church is made for Christ, and instituted on account of Christ, we may rightly say that the Church is the fulness or completion of Christ. In a sense, all those things that are in Christ may be said to find their completion in the members of His body, the Church; for all gifts and graces, whatever, in one word, can be in the Church, are all derived from Christ and find their completion in His members. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as day by day His members increase in number and graces, may be said to be filled up or completed.

“Note here,” writes Cornelius à Lapide, “the union of love between Christ and the Church. For Christ, though in Himself full of every perfection, still considers Himself as if maimed, and like a head deprived of its members, unless He has the Church united to Him as a body with its head. So also Christ is sometimes called the whole Church; for instance, in 1 Corinthians xii. 12. Likewise it is said that we live, grow, act, and suffer in Christ. In the same manner also does the Apostle say that Christ liveth in Him and He in Christ. This explains that saying of Christ, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?’ From this is all our hope and comfort.”

Who is filled all in all. The meaning is that while He maketh those who are members of the Church wise, holy, etc., according to the perfect wisdom, holiness, etc., which are found in Him, Christ finds His completion under every respect in the members of His Church.

CHAPTER II

I. THE BENEFIT OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE GIVEN BY GOD TO GENTILES AND JEWS

1, 2. And you, when you were dead in your offences and sins (*God hath quickened in Christ*), wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of this air, of the spirit that now worketh on the children of unbelief.

AFTER the word **sins** we must supply the words that occur in verse 5, **God hath quickened us together in Christ**. As the words stand, **And you** has no verb, and therefore it is evident that the Apostle having said, **when you were dead in your offences and sins**, suddenly breaks off into a long parenthesis, which continues to verse 5. Leaving out the parenthesis the text would read, **And you, when you were dead in your offences and sins, God hath quickened together with us in Christ**, that is, you Ephesian Gentiles together with us who were Jews. The verse is intimately connected in sense with verse 19 of chapter i., in which St. Paul speaks of the power by which God raised Christ from the dead, setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places, and now **hath**

raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus (ii. 6).

And you, when you were yet dead. Dead, that is, in the spiritual death of sin. Sin is called death, because by it man is separated from the Lord Who is life: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John xiv. 6).

In your offences and sins. What is the difference between offences and sins? Perhaps the Apostle had in his mind the words of Leviticus vii. 7, "As the sacrifice of sin is offered, so also is that of a trespass." St. Thomas interprets offences as sins of omission, and sins as faults of commission. Others refer offences to wilful transgressions, and sins to trespasses against the law through ignorance or inadvertence.

Wherein in time past you walked. The word **walked** implies the multitude and frequency of their transgressions, in which they remained habitually, growing worse and worse (Phil. iii. 18; Jer. ii. 5).

In these two verses the dreadful condition of fallen man before the redemption by Christ is vividly portrayed.

1. In God's sight they were dead: "they had the name of being alive and were dead" (Apoc. iii. 1).

2. They were ruled by the spirit of this world, **according to the course of this world**, and not by the Spirit of God. Of this spirit of the world St. John declares, "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15).

3. They were under the power and dominion of the devil according to the prince of the power of this air. The power exercised by the devil over men was not a power that resided in him by nature, since he is neither lord nor creator; but he ruled, and does rule, over man as far as by sin man freely subjects himself to his influence. Our Lord called Satan by the name of the "Prince of this world," when He said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31), and again later, "The prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything" (John xiv. 30).

The expression **in this air*** is probably equivalent to "in this world," the evil spirits being allowed for the trial of men to tempt and harass them, chiefly that the righteous may gain greater merit.

Of the spirit that now worketh on (or in) the children of unbelief. The Greek word translated unbelief properly means obstinacy. The revised English version has "children of disobedience." The word refers to the revolt of the mind against faith, and of the will against the law. The children of unbelief repel from themselves, by their stubborn incredulity and disobedience, the fruit of the passion of Christ. These miserable men, having no faith in

* From this passage (*v. 2*) and Ephesians vi. 12, 2 Peter ii. 4, Jude 6, the Fathers and Catholic Doctors have concluded (1) that a multitude of fallen angels fill the air, (2) that many of them have fallen into the eternal abyss where their chief already is, (3) that after the last judgment they will all join their leader, Satan, and the other lost in hell (Drach).

eternal things, and no hope of salvation through Christ, are those in whom the prince of the power of this air works according to his will, leading them whithersoever he wills, about whom it is said that "despairing, they give themselves up to lasciviousness, and the working of all uncleanness" (Eph. iv. 19).

The phrase **children of unbelief** means given up to or addicted to unbelief. The Scripture often speaks of those addicted to a vice or loving a virtue as the "children" of that vice or virtue. When the word "children" is used with a genitive expressing reward or punishment, it means worthy of that reward or punishment, as children of death, of hell, of the resurrection, of heaven.

3. **In which (or, among whom) also we all had our conversation** (that is, lived) **in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath** (worthy of wrath) **even as the rest.**

In verse 2 the Apostle has been describing the past evil state of the Gentiles, now he turns to the Jews (**we**, who were Jews), and shows in what an evil plight even they were before the coming of Christ. Here he does not mention that subjection to the devil which he had noticed among the Gentiles, but three different evils springing from corrupt human nature.

1. **The desires of our flesh**, that is, sins of the heart. Internal sins spring from giving way to the corrupt desires of the heart. In another Epistle St. Paul says, "We ourselves also were sometime unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures" (Titus iii. 3). Of such desires the Holy Ghost says, "If thou give thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies" (Eccl. xviii. 31).

2. Sins of outward act are nothing else than the expression of the interior desire or concupiscence. Now there are two kinds of interior concupiscence, both of which St. Paul mentions here. The first is the lust of the flesh in sensual appetite—gluttony, drunkenness, impurity. To gratify these desires is **to fulfil the will of the flesh**, and of this St. Paul says, "They who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8).

The second interior lust of the soul is the desire of honour, of our own excellency—pride, vainglory, etc., and this St. Paul means by **the will of our thoughts**, or of the mind. Such desires do not spring from the body, but from corruption of the soul in evil thoughts arising from pride, which is the impurity of the soul.

3. **And were by nature children of wrath**. These words refer to original sin, as a source of corruption, common both to the Jews and Gentiles (cf. Rom. v. 12). **We were by nature**; not by nature as nature, but as corrupted by the original sin of Adam, for

as nature came from the hand of God it was good.

Children of wrath, that is, worthy of God's anger and of punishment, **even as the rest**, that is, the Gentiles.

From this picture of fallen human nature how clearly do we recognise the need of a Redeemer, powerful, merciful, good ; and what infinite thanks do we owe Him Who hath delivered us from so woeful a state by the sacrifice of His life.

4-6. But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by Whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly *places*, through Christ Jesus. *

God hath quickened us, that is, made us who were dead in sin to live again by true spiritual life. God Himself is the real efficient cause of our justification, and He justified us because He is rich in mercy, and hath loved us with exceeding great charity. This description of our Heavenly Father, by the inspired Apostle, should fill us with unbounded confidence, and should comfort us in moments of depression. God is infinite in every perfection ; but the riches which He delights above all to display, and to pour

* St. Jerome considers the word "But," in verse 4, to have been introduced by the error of copyists into the text.

forth abundantly, are the endless riches of His tender mercy and His lovingkindness.

St. Thomas bids us reflect on the difference between the love that God displays to us and the love which unites us one to the other, in order that we may understand why God is called **rich in mercy**. When we love, our love is caused by some good which attracts us in the object loved, and therefore our love is caused by justice; for it is just to love good wherever it is seen.

But when love causes goodness in the object loved, then it is love proceeding from mercy. Now, the love with which God loves us does cause good in us; and therefore, mercy, not justice, is here assigned as the root of divine love (cf. Isa. Ixiii. 7).

In this mercy, from which springs His love for us, our Father is rich, because He has it not only in abundance, but to an inexhaustible and infinite degree. The mercy of the most compassionate man is limited, and the bounds are easily reached; but not so with God.

(a) Man is limited in riches, and therefore, however liberal in desire, his power in granting favours is strictly limited, so that he can only "be merciful according to his ability" (Tobias iv. 8). But the Lord of all "is rich unto all that call on Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13; Joel ii. 32).

(b) Human mercy is limited because a man can only forgive what is done against himself person-

ally ; and even in forgiveness there must be a limit, lest men should abuse leniency to offend with greater freedom (cf. Eccles. viii. 11). But God nothing can hurt ; so He can forgive every offence, as Eliu or Elihu says in the Book of Job, " If thou sinnest, how shalt thou hurt Him ; and if thy iniquities are multiplied, what shalt thou give Him ? " (xxxv. 6, 7).

(c) Man can show mercy in remitting punishments ; but in this also there is a limit, for he must take heed lest he oppose a higher law of justice ; but God is able to forgive the punishment of all, since He is not restrained by the law of any superior. " When He granteth peace, who is there that can condemn ? " (Job xxxiv. 29). The mercy of God, therefore, is infinite ; it is not limited either by poverty, or fear of doing harm, or by respect to the law of a superior.

For (or on account of) His exceeding charity wherewith He hath loved us.

The charity of God is the efficient cause of our justification, that is the real agent that produces the result. Why does the Apostle call it **exceeding charity** ? The word exceeding means extraordinary, more than sufficient, measureless ; and that God's charity is rightly so called may be seen by the four following considerations :—

1. He has made us and given us our being. " Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of those things Thou hast made " (Wisd. xi. 25).

2. He has made us to His own image and likeness,

and capable of His own happiness. "With Him thousands of the saints; in His right Hand a fiery law: He hath loved the people; all the saints are in His hand" (Deut. xxxiii. 2).

3. He has redeemed men corrupted by sin. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3).

4. Because for our salvation He has given His own Son. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John iii. 16).

Truly may we exclaim with St. Gregory, "O inestimable love of charity, to redeem a slave Thou hast delivered up Thy Son!" **When we were dead in sin**, and could never even have hoped by our own strength to rise again to supernatural life, any more than Lazarus could have hoped to raise himself, **God hath quickened us together in Christ**, by **Whose grace you are saved**. As the Apostle has already told us (i. 20), the exemplar or pattern of what saving grace does and will do in us is seen in Christ. Now he enumerates three benefits, one of which comes to us here below, and the other two will be bestowed on us hereafter, through the grace of Christ our Redeemer. These are, Justification, Resurrection from the dead, Ascension into heaven.

1. Of justification St. Paul speaks when he says that **God hath quickened us together in Christ**. We partake by grace of the life which is, in all its fulness,

in Christ ; and we participate in that life by the action of His grace upon us, **by Whose grace we are saved** (cf. John i. 12, 16).

2. The resurrection of our souls from sin is already accomplished by the same power that raised Christ from the dead ; in this way, therefore, we have already risen with Christ. **God hath raised us up together in Him.** The resurrection of our bodies is promised, and we possess it now in hope (Rom. viii. 11).

3. The third benefit is mentioned in the words **and made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ**, now through hope, hereafter in fact. Christ promised this when He said, "Where I am, there also shall my Minister be" (John xii. 26; Apoc. iii. 21). Whither the Head has gone, the members will follow.

St. Augustine writes : "Christ already certainly sits in heavenly places ; we however not yet ; but because what will be, we already hold by the certainty of hope ; the Apostle has said that we sit together with Him in heavenly places, not yet in our persons, but in Him" (*Cont. Faust.*, lib. xi. cap. 8). "Although our body is not yet there, our hope is there" (St. Aug., *De Agone Xti.* cap. 26). The Apostle uses the past tense on account of the certainty of hope. This is a common usage in Scripture (cf. Isa. liii. 7 ; Ps. xxi. (xxii.) 17).

7. **That He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus.**

St. Paul delights to repeat over and over again the holy name of Jesus. In his fourteen epistles the holy name of Jesus is found two hundred and nineteen times and the name Christ forty-one times.

Verse 7 may refer either to the succeeding ages of the Church in this world, or else to the eternal years of the life to come.

If the first meaning be adopted the verse signifies that God poured forth the abundant riches of His grace on the first Christians, that men might more easily believe in the ages to come. The second meaning would imply that God has raised us up from sin in Christ, that, in the next life, for everlasting ages, He may display towards us in heaven the abundant riches of His grace. "I came that they may have life" in this world by grace, "and that they may have it more abundantly" in heaven by glory (John x. 10).

In the next world God will **show** the riches of His grace, for (2 Cor. iv. 7) in this present time grace is hidden and invisible, because we have it in earthen vessels; and St. John reminds us that "it hath not yet appeared what we shall be" (1 John iii. 2), but in the next world what is now hidden will appear; the full beauty of the soul adorned by the grace of God will be manifest, and no sufferings of this passing life are worthy to be compared to the glory that then shall be revealed in us (Rom. viii. 18).

8, 9. **For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God ; not of works, that no man may glory.**

In verse 5 St. Paul has already incidentally taught that we are saved by grace ; and he now proceeds to explain this truth more fully. I said rightly that you owe all to Christ, for, or because, **by grace you are saved through faith.** Faith, the beginning, foundation and root of all justification, is from the grace of God, and is given without merit that it may be the principle of all merit. First is given faith, "from which the other things, properly called works in which a man lives righteously, are gained" * (1 Cor. xv. 10; Rom. iii. 24). In this passage **saved** means justified. Salvation implies being freed from dangers ; and therefore the perfect salvation of man is in life eternal, when he will be safe from all danger, as a ship that has been in danger of foundering is said to be saved when it reaches harbour. When in this world we are justified from sin we receive the hope of this salvation ; and so in a certain sense we may be said to be saved, "for we are saved by hope" (Rom. viii. 24). This salvation wrought by grace is through the faith of Christ ; for together with infusion of grace in justification there is a motion of faith in God in the case of adults, as we see in Luke viii. 48 and in Romans

* "Fides prima datur, ex qua impetrentur cætera, quæ proprie opera nuncupantur in quibus juste vivitur." ST. AUG., *De predest. SS.* cap. 7.

v. 1. "Being justified therefore by faith" (St. Thomas *in loco*).

The Apostle proceeds to show that both faith (through which we are justified) and grace (by which we are justified) come not from ourselves but from God.

And that not of yourselves.

i. As to faith, the foundation of the whole spiritual building, there are two erroneous notions, both of which are excluded by St. Paul's words.

(a) Some might imagine that faith is from ourselves, and within the power of our will unaided by grace. St. Paul therefore says, **that, faith, not of yourselves.** An act of supernatural faith is above the ability of our free will without God's grace, because the things of faith surpass reason (cf. Eccl. iii. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 11). Faith requires grace for **it is the gift of God** (cf. Wisd. ix. 17; Phil. i. 29).

(b) Secondly, even granting that faith is a gift of God, some men might imagine that it is bestowed through merit, as the reward of preceding good works. To correct this St. Paul says **not of works.** This corresponds exactly with his teaching in Romans xi. 6, "If by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise grace is no more grace."

That no man may glory is the reason why God saves by pure grace, through faith, given without preceding merits, so that all the glory may be to God (Ps. cxiii. 9 (cxv. 1); 1 Cor. i. 29).

The Council of Trent has defined this doctrine in

the following words: "If anyone shall say that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.

"If anyone sayeth that without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost going before, and without His help man can believe, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought, so that the grace of Justification may be bestowed upon him, let him be anathema" (Sess. vi. Can. i. and iii.).

10. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them.

2. As to grace. Having shown that faith is God's gift and not from ourselves, St. Paul now proceeds to teach that grace also comes from God.

We are His workmanship. If we did not make ourselves, all good that is in us comes from Him Who made us; and what is in us by grace comes not of ourselves, nor from ourselves, but from God Who made us. "Is He not thy Father that hath possessed thee and made thee and created thee" (Deut. xxxii. 6; Ps. xcix. (c.) 3). We cannot glory, for we are His workmanship.

Created does not refer to our first creation as men, but our second as Christians, when we were justified. As to create means to make out of nothing, so justification is called creation because it proceeds

from no merits on our part but from grace, and depends on the almighty power of the merits of Christ, as the first creation does on the almighty power of God.

In Christ Jesus, because the act of justification is in, or through, Jesus Christ giving the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. vi. 15; Ps. ciii. (civ.) 30).

In good works. Not only are we justified freely by the grace of Christ, but we are constantly moved by the Holy Spirit to do various good works, which must be attributed to God, as Isaias sings in his canticle of thanksgiving, "Thou hast wrought all our works for us" (Isa. xxvi. 12).

Which God has prepared that we should walk in them. From all eternity God may be said to have prepared the good things He decreed to bestow upon us, and among them are the good works we are enabled to do by His grace. God may be said to **prepare** what He determines to give us. **That we should walk in them.** This is added to safeguard free will. The teaching about grace and the expression **the good works which God has prepared**, might appear to exclude the action of free will, and, therefore, he adds the words **that we should walk in them**, which imply the exercise of our wills, for "we are God's coadjutors" (1 Cor. iii. 9), and the consent of our free will is needed in order that we may bring into effect the good works which God has prepared for us (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 10). Lastly, the word **walk** implies constant progress, for on the road to holiness

and heaven there is no standing still ; we must go ever onwards or we shall fall back, and accordingly our Lord warns us to " walk while we have the light, that the darkness overtake us not " (John xii. 35).

11. For which cause be mindful that you being heretofore Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh, made by hands.*

St. Paul here exhorts the Ephesians to bear in mind the state of misery in which they were before their conversion, in order to increase their gratitude to God for His lovingkindness. Remember, he says, that God has drawn you, without any merit of yours, from the midst of the Gentiles and from all the polluting horrors of idolatry, to the pure light of the Christian faith. In like manner Moses often exhorted (Deut. xi. 18, etc. ; xvi. 12) the children of Israel to bear in mind the mercy of God in delivering them from the land of Egypt. We should remember the evils of our past lives not to delight in them, nor, on the other hand, as a source of depression, discouragement, or servile fear, but with loving sorrow and thanksgiving for having been delivered from them by God.

To prove how thankful they should be for the favour God had bestowed on them in their vocation

* Wherefore remember, that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands" (R. Eng.).

to Christianity, the Apostle reminds them of the evils they suffered and the good things they were deprived of in their former state.

The three principal evils they suffered were :—

1. That they were **Gentiles**, and therefore idolaters, and “went to dumb idols, according as they were led” (1 Cor. xii. 2).
2. That as Gentiles they were **in the flesh**, that is, living enslaved to the sensual appetites. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 8).
3. That they were despised by the Jews, who had deep contempt for them as uncircumcised, and therefore not belonging to the chosen people. By the phrase **that which is called the Circumcision** the Apostle means the Jews; and the expression **made by hands** points to the contrast between the carnal and outward circumcision of the old law and the spiritual circumcision of Christ (cf. Col. ii. 11, 12).
12. (Be mindful) **that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the conversation of Israel, and strangers to the testaments, having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world.**

This verse describes the many blessings they were deprived of by being Gentiles, in all of which they now participate.

1. **Without Christ**, that is, without the promise of Christ which was made to the Jews, as Jeremias wrote, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and

I will raise up to David a just branch" (Jer. xxiii. 5). To the Jews had that glad prophecy been made, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King will come (or, cometh), to thee, the Just and the Saviour" (Zach. ix. 9).

2. **Aliens from the conversation of Israel**, or "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel," as the revised English version has it. The Greek word *πολιτεία* means a republic, kingdom, or people. As Gentiles they were excluded from the communion of the people of God. "The Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans," said the Samaritan woman (John iv. 9); and our Lord said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John iv. 22; cf. Deut. vii. 2).

3. **Strangers to the testaments**, removed far from the covenants between God and His people. Even when the Gentiles became proselytes they were treated by the Jews not as fellow-citizens, but were received as strangers to a share in the covenants. **Testaments** is in the plural, the reason being, according to St. Thomas, that the Jews had the Old Testament in possession and the new in hope, as it is said by Baruch ii. 35, "I will make with them another covenant that shall be everlasting, to be their God, and they shall be My people," a covenant which was given to those "to whom belongeth the adoption as of children, and the glory, and the testament, and the giving of the law, and the promises" (Rom. ix. 4).

Having no hope of the promise. The word **promise** is used for the thing promised. They were thus without the hope of future good, for “to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed” (Gal. iii. 16).

4. And without God in the world. “He who is without the true God,” says St. Jerome, “has no God.” This was the greatest loss and misery of all, to be without God, that is, without the knowledge of God, serving idols and false gods, for “in Judea is God known: His name is great in Israel” (Ps. lxxv. (lxxvi.) 1), but not among the “Gentiles that know not God” (1 Thess. iv. 5). This ignorance of God must be understood of the knowledge that comes by faith and revelation, for the Gentiles had a natural knowledge of God, and are blamed by St. Paul “because when they knew God [by the light of reason] they did not glorify Him as God” (Rom. i. 21).

If the state of the Gentiles was so deplorable, still worse must be the spiritual darkness and misery of those who, having known Christ and been baptised in Him, give up wilfully the hope of the promise and choose deliberately to live “without God in the world.”

13. But now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.

In this verse St. Paul proceeds to describe the blessings they have received in and through Christ

since their conversion. Now, since your conversion and reception into the Church in Christ Jesus, you are in the Body of Jesus Christ, and adhere to Him by faith and charity (1 John iv. 16; Gal. vi. 15). You, who some time were afar off, that is, afar from God, not in distance of place, but in merit, as the Holy Ghost says, "The Lord is far from the wicked" (Prov. xv. 29). Now you are made nigh to God by the Blood of Christ by the merits of that Blood by which Christ has drawn you to Himself. Of this Our Lord spoke when He said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself" (John xii. 32). This He has done through His exceeding charity, which showed itself chiefly by His death on the Cross. "The Lord hath appeared from afar to me. Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). "Thou art near, O Lord: and all Thy ways are truth" (Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 151). "We should attentively consider that without the Blood of the Lord Jesus no one will approach God" (St. Jerome).

14. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmities in His flesh.*

He is our peace. Christ Jesus is the cause of all these blessings, and the cause of our approach to God, the cause of our peace with God. The effect

* Revised English version, "And brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

is put for the cause. This way of speaking is common when everything in the effect entirely depends on the cause, as we say of God, He is our salvation, because every hope of salvation is caused by God. In this case Christ has brought us near from afar off by making peace for us with the offended Majesty of God. This was the first effect of Christ's coming. "On earth peace" (Luke ii. 14). "In His day shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace" (Ps. lxxi. 7). And after His resurrection He said, "Peace be to you" (Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 21). "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, do I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). Peace is quiet order, or the tranquillity of order; for where order is undisturbed we say that peace reigns. In man there is a three-fold order—of man in himself, of man to God, and of man to his neighbour. There is therefore a three-fold peace in man. Peace in his own soul when the lower nature is subject to the higher: "Much peace to those who love Thy law" (Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 165). Again, there is the peace that results from perfect subjection to God and conformity to His Will: "Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). Lastly, peace with others through charity: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness; without which no man shall see God" (Heb. xii. 14). Of all this peace Christ is the cause (comp. St. Thomas, *Com. on St. John*, cap. xiv. lect. vii., and *Com. on Isaias*, cap. xxvi. 3 and xxxii. 17).

Who hath made both one, by uniting in one body the Jews who worshipped the true God and the Gentiles who were idolaters, as He said Himself, “There shall be One fold and One Shepherd” (John x. 16); and Ezechiel prophesied, “One king shall be king over them all” (Ezech. xxxvii. 22).

Breaking down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Imagine an immense plain covered with a vast crowd of people, and a wall running through the midst. The wall makes them two multitudes; break down the wall and they are one. The wall of partition was the separation between Jews and Gentiles, and their mutual contempt one for the other. The Gentiles ridiculed circumcision and other customs among the Jews, and spoke of them with contempt; and the Jews had a horror of the Gentiles who were uncircumcised, ate pork, and were unclean. Yet Christ and the love of Christ united them in One Church.

“Perhaps,” writes Natalis Alexander, “the Apostle was alluding to the stone-partitioned wall which divided the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews in the Temple, to prevent the Gentiles from entering the holy part into which only Jews and those not legally impure might enter” (see Ezech. xliv. 7; 1 Macc. ix. 54; Acts xxi. 28).

(Taking away) the enmities in His Flesh. He hath taken away the enmities that existed between Jews and Gentiles by offering His body and His life on the Cross for all, and also that enmity which sin

had made between both and God, and united all in charity.

15, 16. **Making void the law of commandments contained in decrees; that He might make the two in Himself into one new man, making peace: and might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, killing the enmities in Himself.**

Making void the law. How was this, seeing that our Lord said, "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17)? The answer is, says St. Thomas, that the law consisted both of moral and ceremonial precepts. The moral precepts Christ did not destroy, but fulfilled, and added to them counsels of perfection, and explained aright those that the Scribes and Pharisees understood wrongly. Thus He said, "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 20); and of the love of enemies (Matt. v. 43, 44). The ceremonial precepts He fulfilled in His own life and person, and in fulfilling abolished them. For example, the command as to the paschal lamb He fulfilled, and by offering Himself as the true Lamb, prefigured by the ceremonial rite, He abolished the command.

The law of Moses is called **the law of commandments contained in decrees**, not because the new

law has no commandments (for our Lord Himself says, John xiii. 34, "A new commandment I give to you"), but because of the vast number of legal precepts so difficult to keep (Acts xv. 10). The Mosaical law imposed a multitude of commands, but did not give grace to keep them ; on the other hand, the new law of Christ directs us by its commands as to how we ought to act, and helps us to fulfil what it enacts by conferring grace. The imperfect law was made void by the perfect ; the shadow vanished before the light of truth.

That He might make the two, viz. Jews and Gentiles, in Himself into one new man, making peace. To emphasize more the closeness of the union he describes, he uses the phrase **into one man**, rather than **into one people**. He drew them together into the union of one body with one spirit, of which body (the one Church) He is the head. This unity of the Church is so true and real that our Lord says of it that it is the special glory He has given them : "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, as we also are one" (John xvii. 22).

Making peace between them and with God, **reconciling both with God killing** by His death **on the cross** the **enmities** that separated them from one another and from God. Christ has reconciled us to God ; for before the redemption He wrought, our "iniquities had divided us from God, and our sins had hidden His face from us that He should not

hear" (Isa. lix. 2). St. John Chrysostom remarks that St. Paul is not content to say taking away the enmity, but *killing* it altogether so that it may not rise again. How then can it rise again? By our great iniquity. Nothing but selfwill can make it rise again (cf. Rom. viii. 39).

17. And coming He preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh.

He did not send His message of reconciliation and peace through any other; but **coming** Himself, He preached that the love of our neighbour is the way to peace with God (1 John iii. 14), and that we cannot say we have peace with Christ if we have not peace with Christians, for they are His Members. **Coming** visibly in the flesh, He preached to all, both Jews and Gentiles, good tidings of that peace which He wished His Apostles and conferred upon them (Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 21; Isa. lxi. 1).

18. For by Him we have access both in one Spirit to the Father.

Here is shown the cause of that peace and the way in which it is brought about. The union between the Jews and Gentiles is caused by the Holy Ghost bestowed on both of them; and thus later (chap. iv.) St. Paul exhorts them to be careful to keep this unity in the bond of peace (1 Cor. xii. 11).

We have access to the Father **by Him**, through Christ, since Christ works through the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 9). "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His," and therefore everything done through the Holy Spirit is done also through Christ.

To the Father Who is the Majestic King to whom we have access through the Son in the Holy Ghost (Gal. iv. 5, 6). When it is said that we have access to the Father, "we must understand it to apply to the whole Trinity, because on account of the unity of Essence, in the Father is the Son and the Holy Ghost, and in the Holy Ghost the Father and the Son. Therefore when he says *to the Father*, he shows especially that whatever the Son has He has from the Father, and He recognises that He has it from Him" (St. Thomas *in loco*).

Christ did not simply preach peace to those who lived in His own time on earth, but sent His Apostles with the good tidings far and wide over the whole world: "Hear you that are far off what I have done, and you that are near know my strength" (Isa. xxxiii. 13). "I have created the fruit of the lips (the fruit of preaching) peace, peace to him who is far off, and peace to him who is near, said the Lord." But on condition that they love God and are converted, for "the wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God" (Isa. lvii. 19-21).

In the next three verses it is shown that the Gentile converts were as much favoured in the spiritual kingdom of Christ as the Jewish converts, and were admitted as fully to the best gifts of Christ.

19, 20. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the Saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

Now therefore you Gentiles are no longer looked down upon as Proselytes were among the Jews, but having access through Christ in the Spirit to the Father, you enjoy every Christian privilege equally with the converts who were Jews. St. Paul has here introduced a double simile, calling the Church a "house" and a "city" (comp. 1 Tim. iii. 15 and Ps. cxxi. (cxxii.) 3). Now in a house the father rules; in a city the king or some magistrate. In a house men are collected in the relations of private life, in a city in the relations of public life. The Church resembles a family, because it is ruled by a father; and it resembles a city or commonwealth if we consider the relations of the faithful to each other. So St. Paul uses the words **strangers** and **foreigners**; strangers referring to the house of God looked at as a family; foreigners if we consider the Church as God's city. Formerly the Gentiles were like strangers to a

household, and foreigners to the inhabitants of a city or commonwealth. Now is fulfilled the word of Isaias the Prophet, "Behold an inhabitant shall come who was not with me, he that was a stranger to thee before, shall be joined to thee" (Isa. liv. 15) If the Church is considered as a city, you are **fellow-citizens** equal in rights to us, and if as a house you are of the household, the **domestics of God** (cf. 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6; x. 21; 1 Peter iv. 17).

Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. These words continue the simile. By a common figure of speech the container is spoken of for the things contained, so the faithful who are contained in the Church are spoken of as the building or the house itself. The foundation is first mentioned, and then is described how upon the foundation the house is built. The foundation is twofold, the principal and the secondary. St. Paul mentions the secondary first, saying that the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, that is, by the doctrine revealed to them and by them delivered to the Church as their divine message. St. John mentions the Apostles as the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem, "and the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb" (Apoc. xxi. 14). They are foundations, inasmuch as they announce Christ by their doctrine.

The Prophets are introduced with the Apostles

to show that both speak of the same Christ and both preach the same truth by the same Spirit. What the Prophets foretold the Apostles declare to have been fulfilled (cf. Rom. i. 1, 2).

But the principal foundation is only Jesus Christ, and so he says **Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone**. Three characteristics of Christ are noted, He is (a) the stone of the foundation ; (b) the corner-stone ; (c) the chief stone.

(a) He is called the **stone** to denote the firmness and stability of the foundation, for God being wise has built His house not on sand, but on immovable rock, Christ ; so that the wind, floods, and rain of this world's trials beating upon it cannot move it, for it is founded on a rock (St. Matt. vii. 24, 25). It is built and rests on that stone cut from the mountain without hands (Dan. ii. 34).

(b) The **corner-stone** connects two walls, and Christ is so called because in Him the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, are united in one Church, and therefore did David prophesy that "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes," a text quoted by our Lord Himself in the Gospel, and afterwards by St. Peter speaking of his risen Master (Ps. cxvii. (cxviii.) 22, 23 ; St. Matt. xxi. 42 ; Acts iv. 11).

(c) Lastly, our Lord is called the **chief stone**, on account of His supreme dignity, He being the strength of the whole building. "Therefore thus

saih the Lord God, Behold I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a precious stone founded in the foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16).

In a material building, the foundation-stone is buried in the ground, and is below all; but in the spiritual building the foundation is in heaven above and the building descends from on high: "I saw the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven" (Apoc. xxi. 2).

21. In Whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord.

In this verse four things are noticed which are concerned with the construction of a house, the simile being continued.

(a) **In Whom all the building.** The foundation; Christ, as has already been explained, is the foundation. "Other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

(b) **Being framed together.** The actual construction on the foundation is implied in these words. If we understand them in an allegorical sense they refer to the Church as a whole, which may be said to be like a house, framed together by the conversion of men to the faith. If understood in their moral sense, we may refer them to each particular Christian soul, which resting by faith on Christ as the foundation, builds up a palace in itself for

Him by good works done in charity with grace. The soul thus employed is typified by the wise woman of whom the Holy Ghost says, "The wise woman buildeth her house" (Prov. xiv. 1), and St. Paul warns every Christian "to take heed how he buildeth" on Christ (1 Cor. iii. 10).

God is the real and principal builder upon the foundation He has laid, for, "Unless the Lord build the house, he laboureth in vain who buildeth it"; but either the prelates of the Church (if we consider the whole Church), or each soul (if we take the moral sense) is the instrument in God's Hands, by which He does the work (Phil. ii. 13).

(c) **Groweth up into a holy temple.** The Church increases and thus grows up like a building, when the multitude of good Christians is augmented (Acts vi. 7). "All therefore," says St. Augustine, "who thus believe (in Christ with love to Him) are like living stones of which the temple of God is constructed" in Psalm lxxxvi. Each fervent soul also groweth up, by good works in grace and charity, and by the exercise of virtue, into a holy temple of God; holy it ought to become, to be a fitting temple of God: "the Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle" (Ps. xlv. (xlvi.) 4). That God may dwell in us as His temples we ought to prepare our souls by holiness (1 Cor. iii. 16). But are we not the temples of God immediately we are in a state of grace? We are. But in proportion as we become more perfect, God more and more dwells

within us and this is the perfection of our spiritual building.

(d) **In the Lord**, in complete union with Him.

22. In Whom you also are built together, into a habitation of God in the Spirit.

On Christ, as foundation, not only we who were Jews, but you Gentiles are built together into one spiritual temple of God, one Church (cf. 1 Peter ii. 4, 5). A habitation of God, because He dwells in us by faith (Eph. iii. 17). But this cannot be done without charity, for "he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). Charity, however, comes by the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5), therefore St. Paul adds **in the Spirit**.

In this chapter, while describing the benefits conferred by God on the members of the Church, St. Paul implies the distinctive notes of the true Church.

1. *Unity*. All are collected into one (v. 14), therefore the Church is one *body* (v. 16) living by one and the same internal spirit (v. 18), thus giving the external visible unity of the Body and the internal unity of the spirit; in other words, the Church is *one building* which has one principal foundation, Christ (v. 20).

2. *Sanctity*. The members of the Church are holy (v. 19), live in the Holy Spirit. (vv. 18 and 22),

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and are incorporated with Christ and are made one body with Him (*vv. 13 and 16*).

3. *Catholicity*, for the Church embraces all nations (*v. 14*) and extends to all times (*v. 20*).

4. *Apostolicity*. It is founded on the Apostles (*v. 20*).

CHAPTER III

i. For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles.

THESE words are intimately connected with the closing words of the last chapter. St. Paul had explained to the Ephesians that they were no longer strangers, but members of the one body of Christ; and now he proceeds, **For this cause**, (because you have been thus called into the Church) **I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for (in behalf of) you Gentiles . . . bow my knees to the Father**" to thank Him for so marvellous a grace, and begging for perseverance for you. There is a long parenthesis from after the first verse until verse 14, in which the words, **for this cause** are repeated and the verb given. Having reached the words **for you Gentiles** he suddenly breaks off, from the intensity of his feeling, and dwells enthusiastically on the immense benefit bestowed upon them by God in their vocation to the true faith.* A similar parenthesis is found in Romans v. 12-18.

* This view of the construction is adopted by Menochius, Cornelius à Lapide, and others. Natalis Alexander quotes Theodoretus for the

The prisoner of Jesus Christ, or the one bound for the sake of Jesus Christ. This Epistle was written from Rome, when St. Paul was in prison there; and he mentions his captivity as an appeal to the feelings of his hearers, and also as a circumstance most honourable to himself, because it was for the name of Jesus Christ, for it is the cause and not the mere fact of suffering that makes the martyr. As he wears his chain for Jesus Christ, he rejoices in it more than a king does in his crown. He assigns a double reason for his sufferings.

(a) First, he suffers for the faith of Christ, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, and he rejoices with thanksgiving, and "glorifies God in that Name" (1 Peter iv. 15, 16).

(b) Secondly, he suffers for the Church; so he adds "for the Gentiles," for he had lost his liberty, and was ornamented with a chain because of his zeal in preaching the word of salvation to the Gentiles. In another place he says, "I rejoice in my sufferings for you" (Col. i. 24).

same explanation. Van Steenkiste suggests that having said "the prisoner," the thought occurs that some, through prejudice, might mistrust his mission to the Gentiles, or might be tempted to despise his authority, and so he breaks off thus abruptly to enlarge on the reality of his mission.

2-4. If yet (or, for as much as) you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me towards you: how that according to revelation, the mystery has been made known to me, as I have written above in a few words. As you reading may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

The words translated if yet should not be understood to express doubt. The Greek words express none, but are equivalent to "for as much as" you have heard and understood that the grace of being the Apostle of the Gentiles has been given to me. To each one, as the Apostle says later, grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and to me has been given that I should reap a spiritual harvest among you.

How that according to revelation. St. Paul here speaks of the exalted dignity he had received from God, and of the office of an Apostle, which implied the revelation of the mystery of the redemption, and he indicates how clear was the knowledge thus bestowed on his mind. Afterwards, in verse 13 he mentions the counter-balancing trials and tribulations by which his humility was preserved and his constancy tested. To show his apostolic dignity he states two things: first, the clear knowledge vouchsafed to him of various mysteries of God's Wisdom; secondly, the office of practically dispensing to others the fruit of these mysteries, as we see in verse 7 by the words, **of which I am made a minister.**

First, then, he declares the fact that when he was called to be an Apostle, God bestowed upon him a superhuman knowledge. This knowledge, coming from God, he implies to have been certain, full, and excellent.

(a) *Certain*, because it was not derived from any human source, nor dependent on any human mind, but it proceeded from divine revelation, and not from man ; not through the teaching of the other Apostles (cf. Gal. i. 12).

(b) His knowledge was *full* and complete, because the Christian mysteries were fully revealed to him. From the few words I have written above, says the Apostle, you may judge how full is the knowledge that has been imparted to me.

Some rationalists, as De Wette, Renan, etc., contend that this self-glorification is unworthy of St. Paul ; and use it as an objection to the authenticity of the Epistle. But all this is written by the Apostle, not from vainglory but for God's glory, in order that his mission might not be despised. This is an instance of the captious objections of such critics, who are rigorous enough in exacting valid reasons from Christians ; but are content with any argument, however hollow, if it only seem to be against Christ. If this expression (*v. 4*) appears strange in the mouth of the humble St. Paul, we may for that very reason suppose that a forger, pretending to be St. Paul, would have avoided it.

(c) This revealed knowledge is *excellent*, because peculiar to the Apostles.

5. And in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit.

The word Prophets here refers to those of the New Testament (Eph. iv. 11). Although the prophets of the old law knew a part of the high mysteries of the redemption, and of the calling of the Gentiles to the true faith, still their knowledge was not clear and detailed like that of the Apostles. So the emphasis should be on the word "as," for St. Paul does not deny that the prophets of old had much light concerning these mysteries ; but declares that it was small compared to the knowledge given to the Apostles. Our Lord implies the excellence of the revelation vouchsafed to the Apostles when He said, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Luke viii. 10 ; cf. Luke x. 23, 24).

This excellence consisted in three things :—

(a) The Apostles had the revelation immediately from the only Begotten Son of God Himself, the Light of the world ; for, as St. John the Baptist said, "the only Begotten Son Who is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). On the other hand, the prophets of the Old Testament were instructed by Angels or by figures (Isa. vi. 6).

(b) The Apostles saw the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, not by mere images as the ancient prophets did ; and so our Lord exclaimed,

“Blessed are the eyes which see the things which you see” (Luke x. 23).

(c) The Apostles were appointed as the dispensers of this mysterious grace to the whole world; and so needed a clearer knowledge themselves, and God always gives men what is necessary to carry out the work and office to which they are appointed.

6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and co-partners of His promise in Christ Jesus by the gospel.

In this verse the Apostle declares what that gracious mystery is of which he has been speaking, namely, the calling of the Gentiles into the one Church, and therefore to an equal participation with the Jews in all the divine promises. The three privileges of the Jews which distinguished them from other nations were:—

1. The promise of the inheritance (Rom. iv. 13; Ps. xv. (xvi.) 5).

2. Special election as the chosen people (Deut. vii. 6).

3. The promise of Christ, the Messiah (Gen. xii. 3).

These three privileges the Gentiles in no way formerly shared, as they were peculiar to the Jews; but now, as members of the one Christian Church, they possess all the graces of Christ and the promise of the eternal inheritance. This St. Paul expresses in verse 6, for—

1. As to the first privilege, that of the promised

inheritance, they are **fellow-heirs** with the Jews in the heavenly inheritance (Matt. viii. 11; Gal. iii. 28, 29).

2. As to the special election as the people of God, the Gentiles are now **of the same body**, that is, of Christ (John x. 16).

3. As to the promise made to the Israelites as the seed of Abraham, the Gentiles now have been made **co-partners** of that promise (Rom. xv. 8-12).

All these benefits have come to the Gentiles, not through Moses, but **in Christ Jesus**; and again not by the fulfilment of the law and by bearing that yoke which St. Peter declared "neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" (Acts xv. 10), but **in Christ Jesus by the gospel**, through which all can be saved (cf. John i. 17; 2 Peter i. 4; Rom. i. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4).

In verses 7-9 St. Paul sets forth the ministry with which he had been invested, and shows the help given to him for its duties.

7. **Of which I am made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, which is given to me according to the operation of His power.**

The Apostle here proclaims to all that he was made a minister of the graces of God, not by any merit of his own, but by the grace and favour of God. Christ had chosen him for a vessel of election to carry His name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel when he was still a persecutor.

8. **To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.**

The profound humility of St. Paul makes him thus declare himself to be the least, not only of the Apostles, but of all Christians; for by the word **saints** he means the followers of Christ (Eph. i. 1). The more exalted are the graces, whether exterior or interior, which have been bestowed upon a man, the more perfect ought to be his humility and self-contempt; and the more completely should he acknowledge that all comes from God and not from himself. So the Holy Ghost says, "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things; and thou shalt find grace before God, for great is the power of God alone, and He is honoured by the humble" (Eccl. iii. 20). According to this principle of spiritual wisdom, we see here St. Paul, the Apostle chosen by Jesus Christ, miraculously converted and enlightened by God Himself with the clear knowledge of mysteries the most profound, celebrated throughout the world for his miracles and supernatural gifts, declaring himself to be the **least of all**. He was sincerely in his own estimation the least, otherwise these words would be mere pretence humility, veiling real pride and self-esteem; and he would have been a hypocrite instead of a saint. But how could he thus esteem himself? With the light God bestowed on him, he clearly saw that all the good he possessed was the free gift of God; and in

comparing himself with others, he contrasted what really belonged to him in himself, with what belonged to God in others. Moreover, he acknowledged that though God had bestowed wonderful graces upon him, if He had given them to another he would have co-operated better with them and given God more glory.

He calls himself the least, remarks St. Thomas, on account of what he was in the past; and in this way he gives more glory to God, Who bestowed so exalted an office on one so unworthy (1 Cor. xv. 9).

In the words, to preach **among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ**, St. Paul indicates the great importance of the duty given him by God, which was nothing less than to reveal and manifest the wonderful and as yet hidden secrets of God, namely, the greatness of Christ and the salvation wrought by Him for the faithful. These two doctrines form the whole gospel.

In speaking of the first he declares that the commission he had received was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (1 Cor. i. 17, and ix. 16). The riches of Christ are true riches; and they are unsearchable, because so great is His mercy that it cannot be comprehended or measured (Isa. xxxiii. 6). For in Christ are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3), and they are unsearchable; the wisdom and knowledge of Christ no one can perfectly understand (Job xi. 7). We cannot perfectly "comprehend the steps of God" through

created things, by which, however, His attributes are partially known (Rom. xi. 33).

In speaking of the second, he declares his office to be nothing less than

9. to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, Who created all things.

The duty entrusted to the Apostles was to bring the light of Him Who is the Light of the world to the souls of all men; not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles, that is, to the whole human race; and thus to become what our Lord Himself called them, the light of the world (Matt. v. 14). This light was to extend to the Gentiles through the preaching and miracles of the Apostles; for our Lord is the True Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world (John i. 9).

To enlighten, as much as in me lies, **all men**, that is, all who have the will to believe (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 4) what kind of mystery and secret dispensation of mercy that is which had been hidden in the mind and knowledge of God from all eternity—how deep and wonderful it is, and how wisely He now gives the knowledge of this secret to men.

Who created all things. In these words the fundamental doctrine of the creation of everything by the power of God is taught. The Greek adds the words “through Jesus Christ” to this verse, and

St. John Chrysostom, Theodoretus, and others read the verse thus; but the words do not occur in the Vulgate. Modern critics (Drach) are agreed in regarding them as an interpolation.

10-12. **That the manifold wisdom of God may be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places through the Church, according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord: in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.**

The Apostle has already shown the surpassing dignity of his office by the importance of the matters committed to him; now he shows the same by the useful effect of his office, which is nothing less than the revelation of the deepest designs of God's Wisdom to the highest personages, even to the Angels themselves. St. Paul calls the wisdom of God **manifold**, because, though in itself simple and one, as God Himself, still in its effects and manifestations to creatures, it is varied and manifold. Wisdom is said by the Holy Ghost to be "one" yet "manifold" (Wisd. vii. 22), that is, one in essence, manifold in its effects. This manifold character of divine Wisdom is governed **according to the eternal purpose**, that is, by the distinction of different times in which God decreed to manifest His Wisdom. For God in His Wisdom appoints certain times, and we are obliged to wait for God's

times; "it is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i. 7). All these eternal decrees were made in **Christ Jesus our Lord**, for He is the Wisdom and the Word of the Father; and as all the decrees of the Father are made in Wisdom, they are made in Him.

What is meant when it is said that the manifold wisdom of God is **made known to the Principalities and Powers**, that is, to the Angels in the heavenly places through the Church? The Principalities and Powers are two of the nine choirs of Angels in heaven, and though these two only are mentioned, the other seven are no doubt included. St. Thomas considers that these two choirs are mentioned because they receive their names from the excellence of their functions. For, says the holy Doctor, the Powers remove impediments to salvation, and the Principalities preside over good works in course of performance. High, therefore, is the dignity of the personages to whom the revelation is made, namely, to the Angels by whom men are directed and defended.

But a difficulty remains in the words **through the Church**. How, it may be asked, can it be said that the Angels, who see God face to face, are taught the wisdom of God through the Church? Notice first that the words are **through the Church**, not *by* the Church or by the teaching of the Church. On this St. Thomas writes:—

"The Angels, even those in the lower Choirs, see God face to face, otherwise they would not be in a state of beatitude, because the beatitude of a rational creature consists in the sight of the Divine Essence. It is not therefore fitting, nor is there any reason, to say that the Holy Ones in the Heavenly Country are taught by those on earth, however perfect they may be. For although "amongst those born of women no greater has arisen than St. John the Baptist; nevertheless he that is the lesser in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (St. Matt. xi. 11). It cannot then be said that the Blessed, who see face to face the Word, Who is the Mirror without spot, in which all things shine forth plainly, should still be taught by mortal men. When, therefore, St. Paul says that the Wisdom of God is made known to the Angels **through the Church**, that is, through the Apostles' preaching, we must understand that the Angels do not learn it from them, but see it in them. For, as St. Augustine writes (*super Gen. ad Lit.*), 'God, before He created creatures (before, I mean, in the order of nature, not in the order of time; since in the order of time all things were created together), implanted in the minds of the Angels the reasons (or the plan) of natural things; from which it comes to pass that Angels know natural things in two ways: (1) they know them "in the Word," and this knowledge is called "matutinal" of the morning; and (2) they know them in their own natures, and this knowledge is called "vespertinal" of the evening.'

"Further, we must understand that there are certain depths in the secret mysteries of grace which surpass all created intelligence, and therefore were not implanted in the minds of the Angels; and these things the Angels do not understand, for they are hidden in God. These things therefore the Angels do not know by their own knowledge, nor do they see them in God; but they come to a knowledge of them when they are unfolded in their effects. Thus certain things, in themselves hidden in God, the Angels come to know by seeing them worked out in the Apostles and in the Church. To illustrate this by an example; the idea of a building not yet erected is hidden in the mind of the architect, and no one but God can know it. But after the house has been built, men gather from it what the idea of the architect was. They are not taught by the house; but they come to the knowledge of the idea, before hidden to them, by seeing the house" (*vide ST. THOMAS in loco*).

Cornelius à Lapide, in explaining this text, writes as follows: "**Through the Church**, that is, through the things wrought by Christ and His Apostles in the Church, many mysteries concerning Christ and His followers have been made evident to the Angels. For, although from the first moment of their beatitude they knew by revelation the mystery of the Incarnation and of our Redemption, still, they did not understand all details concerning it, but came to the knowledge of them gradually by the events

they witnessed. Instances of such things may have been the Sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist ; the method of justification and similar things."

12. In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.

We have no ground of confidence save in Jesus Christ ; nor can we obtain, or even hope for, anything but through Him. If anyone should presume to approach God except through Him, as His member, and through faith in His Name, at least implicitly, he would be resisted and receive rather a curse and punishment than a blessing and benefits. But in Him, and through Him, and with Him, we have a free and fearless approach to God, Who in Christ is our Father ; and we have all confidence that we shall be forgiven and received by Him, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour (Heb. iv. 16). God foretold by the mouth of Jeremias that Christians would be filled with this joyful confidence, when He declared, "Thou shalt call ME Father, and shalt not cease to walk after ME" (Jer. iii. 19 ; cf. Rom. v. 1, 2).

13. Wherefore I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

The Apostle, after having declared the high dignity of his office, now turns to consider the grievous tribulations that afflicted him ; and first, he exhorts

the Ephesians not to lose courage on account of the sufferings of his imprisonment in Rome ; secondly, as grace is necessary in order to preserve confidence in trials, he prays that this grace may be bestowed upon them. The tribulations I endure, he says, have happened to me because I am an Apostle and because of my firm faith in Christ. They do not disturb me, nor can they separate me from Christ (Rom. viii. 35). It is not for myself I fear, but for you, and therefore **I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you**, lest my sufferings for the faith may be the occasion of harm to you by making you fall from the faith and the practice of good works (Heb. xii. 3). These troubles that I endure are indeed **for you** ; they are useful for you (2 Cor. i. 6), and they test the sincerity of your faith (Ecclcus. ii. 5). Not only are they **for you**, but they are also **your glory**, because it is an honour to you that God has exposed His Apostles and Prophets to tribulations and sufferings for your salvation (2 Cor. i. 14). Faithful souls are often tempted to want of confidence when they see the Church and holy people suffering, persecuted, despised, and the wicked prosperous (cf. Ps. lxxii. (lxxiii.)). The words of the Apostle will help us to resist this temptation, and to consider sufferings endured for Christ's sake to be a glory. "The troubles," says St. Jerome, "that to unbelievers are punishments to the faithful are glory and victory ; for not to yield in adversity is to overcome" (*in loco*).

14-16. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man.

For this cause. After exhorting them not to lose confidence in God he goes on to pray that grace may be bestowed on them always to rejoice in tribulation.

I bow my knees. Prayer is made acceptable to God by humility; and kneeling is an acknowledged sign of subjection. Of humility, as a condition of prayer, David says, "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble; and he hath not despised their petition (Ps. ci. (cii.) 18; cf. Eccles. xxxv. 21). No doubt the Apostle here means chiefly the humble prostration of the soul (as in Phil. ii. 10), though the exterior reverence is by no means excluded. It was certainly his custom to kneel in prayer, as we see in Acts xx. 36. The words **of our Lord Jesus Christ** do not occur in three important MSS., and are considered by many to be interpolated by copyists.

Of Whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named. The paternity which is in man and other created things descends from God, the universal Father and Creator of all, and is a reflection of the true Paternity of God the Father. The Paternity by which the Father gives His whole nature to the

Son without any imperfection is the true and real paternity ; the paternity in created things is, as it were, nominal, the distant shadow or image of that real and perfect paternity. All the creatures of God derive their power of becoming fathers and generating offspring from Him.

But in heaven is there any paternity named from that of God? In a certain sense there is, replies St. Thomas. For though, strictly speaking, he alone is a father who gives life to another, in a certain sense he may also be called a father who influences others to some act of life, as, for instance, to understand, will, or love well (1 Cor. iv. 15). Since therefore among the Angels one illuminates and perfects another who is in a lower hierarchy, it follows that one Angel is the father of another in the same way that a master is father of his disciple.

St. Jerome notices that St. Paul has taken the Greek word, here rendered "paternity," from the Septuagint, where it is used in the sense of a family or tribe. Natalis Alexander explains the verse thus : "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom all that family, so numerous, of Angels in heaven, and of men on earth, as from one beginning and head, draw their origin."

According to the riches of His glory, that is, out of the abundance of His majesty and magnificence, for "Glory and riches are in His house" (Ps. cxi. (cxii.) 3; Prov. viii. 18).

That He would grant you to be strengthened

by His Spirit with might unto the inward man.

The Holy Spirit, by Whom we are strengthened, is the Spirit of Fortitude, of Whom Isaias says, "It is He that giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not" (Isa. xl. 29). He is the source of our courage and confidence, for without Him we should soon faint. "Youths shall faint and labour, and young men shall fall through weakness: but they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. xl. 30).

This strength is interior, unto the inward man, for no mere external support would suffice; and it is the cause of our being able to bear tribulations without fainting. This power we obtain by faith, which possesses wonderful strength, because it is "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1), that is, it makes things that we hope for to subsist in us, and therefore St. Peter says, "Whom resist ye, strong in faith" (1 Peter v. 9). So he adds—

17. That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that being rooted and founded in charity.

Christ dwells in our hearts when we have true faith, and it is by faith that He there dwells, not, however, by faith only, but also by charity, by which we are made holy. So St. Paul continues to pray

that they may be rooted and founded in charity. Constancy and firmness are expressed by these two similitudes: of a tree pushing its roots deeply into the soil, and of a building with foundations deep and strong. As a tree without root withers and a house without foundations easily falls, so also the spiritual life, unless resting on charity as its foundation and drawing from it as from a root the nourishing sap, cannot long flourish or endure. "O Love, which ever burns and is never extinguished, Charity, my God, enkindle me" (S. Aug., *Confess.*, bk. 10).

18. That you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth.

In this verse the Apostle shows the fruit of the increase of faith and charity which he has just prayed may be bestowed on the Ephesians; that fruit is a knowledge of God and of Christ. Both here and in the future life the knowledge of God is necessary for us; for in heaven we shall rejoice on account of our knowledge of God Himself, and of God become Man for us, as our Lord says, "This is Eternal Life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). And of this knowledge, which will be our beatitude, our Lord speaks in these words: "I am the door: by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in" (by the contemplation of the Divine Nature), "and go out" (by the contem-

plation of the Human Nature), "and shall find pastures" of eternal joy (John x. 9). In this life faith is the beginning of that future knowledge, because it is the "substance of things hoped for," making them already to exist within us in a certain incipient way. Whence it is that our faith is in these two mysteries of the Godhead and the Manhood of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2). In this verse (18) the mystery of the Divine Nature is mentioned, and in verse 19 the mystery of the Incarnation.

The knowledge of the Divine Nature is proposed in the words **That you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints**, etc., that is, be strong in faith and love, for thus will you come to Eternal Life, where God will be present and you will know him perfectly. That God manifests Himself to the loving soul is clearly seen in John xiv. 23. It must be remembered that the word **comprehend** has two senses; sometimes it means "to include mentally," and then he that comprehends entirely contains within Himself the thing comprehended. But sometimes the word is used in the sense of "apprehend," and then it signifies the removal of distance between the mind and the thing known, and implies the idea of nearness. In the first sense of the word, God cannot be comprehended by any created intellect, for in that case the created intellect would be able to know God perfectly as He knows Himself, which is impossible. Only the Infinite can, in this full sense, comprehend the Infinite. The word **comprehend**,

therefore, in this passage must be understood, in the second sense, implying a nearness to God by grace here and glory hereafter, through which, according to its measure, the created mind can see and know Him.

This second way of comprehending God is shared in by all the Saints, and therefore the Apostle adds, **with all the Saints**, as David sings, "This glory have all His Saints" (Ps. cxlix. 9). This glory is the prize of which St. Paul says, "So run that you may obtain" (1 Cor. ix. 24).

The breadth, and length, and height, and depth. These words appear to be suggested by that passage of the Book of Job wherein Sophar, the Naamathite, says, "Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the footsteps of God, and wilt find out the Almighty perfectly," implying that He is incomprehensible. The following verses give the reason of this incomprehensibility: "He is higher than the heavens, and what will you do? He is deeper than hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth and broader than the sea" (Job xi. 7). In this sublime passage the incomprehensible nature of God is expressed by metaphors taken from the dimensions of material objects, and the Apostle does the same.

In this metaphorical sense, by **Breadth** is meant the infinite extent of God's power and wisdom, stretching over all created things (Ecclus. i. 10). By **Length** His eternal duration is signified: "Thou, O Lord, endurest for ever" (Ps. ci. (cii.) 13). **Height**

expresses the perfection and nobility of His Nature, which infinitely surpasses all created excellence: "The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens" (Ps. cxii. (cxiii.) 4). **Depth** brings to our minds the unfathomable abyss of His Wisdom, which "is a great depth; who shall find it out?" (Eccles. vii. 25). It follows, therefore, that the end of our faith and charity is to make us arrive at the perfect knowledge, as far as it can be attained, by faith, of the infinite extent of His power, His everlasting duration, the height of His perfect nature and the incomprehensible depth of His Wisdom.

In another sense these words may be understood of the perfection of charity in our own souls. In this sense the breadth of charity would be its extension to all, even to enemies (Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 96); its length would mean its duration and perseverance, for "charity never falleth away" (1 Cor. xiii. 8). Its height would be the heavenly intention which animates it, for God should be loved not for temporal ends, but for Himself. Depth would refer to the origin of charity, which is the grace of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Rom. v. 5).

19. To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

St. Paul now proceeds to the knowledge of the mysteries of the Human Nature of God incarnate. Whatever is found in the mystery of the redemption

of man is altogether the work of Love. It was "for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us" (Eph. ii. 4) that He became Man. His death proceeded from Love, for "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. v. 2). Therefore to **know the charity of Christ** is to know all the mysteries of the Incarnation and of our redemption; the charity displayed in these mysteries **surpasses all knowledge**, and is simply incomprehensible to the human mind. How is it, then, that the Apostle desires us to know that which he declares to be incomprehensible and beyond all created intelligence? He desires us to know and acknowledge this very fact, that it is so immense as to surpass all knowledge (cf. Phil. iv. 7).

The charity of Christ: that is, the charity which God the Father has shown us in Christ (2 Cor. v. 19).

That you may be filled unto all the fulness of God. The effect of the true knowledge of God by faith and charity is here indicated, namely, that they may be filled in their souls with a perfect participation of the gifts of God, so that in this life they may possess a full measure of virtue and hereafter of glory. This is the effect of true charity.

20, 21. Now to Him Who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to Him be glory in the Church, and in Jesus Christ, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.

The Apostle ends his prayer by a doxology or short hymn of praise to God, just as the Church ends all the Psalms with the "Glory be to the Father," etc.

First he praises the power of God, and describes His Divine Majesty as able to do all things, and far more than we can desire or conceive, for Almighty is His Name (Exod. xv. 3). This abundance of power will be recognised if we reflect upon what He has done in us and for us, **according to the power that worketh in us**. For no man could have desired, or could even have conceived it possible that God should become Man, and thus make man partaker of the Divine Nature (2 Peter i. 4). Yet this God has done in the Incarnation (cf. Eccl. xviii. 1-3).

Thanksgiving and praise are offered to God for two benefits, the institution of the Church, and the Incarnation of God the Son. To Him—God the Father, be glory in the Church, for those things He has done in the Church: in Jesus Christ, that is, through or by Christ, Whom He hath given us. To Him be glory for ever, not only now, but **unto all generations, world without end**, in that eternal age containing all things. "To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. i. 17).

CHAPTER IV

1. **I therefore, the Prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.**

IN the three preceding chapters St. Paul has been explaining at length the wonderful privileges bestowed on those converted to Christianity ; and he now goes on to exhort the Ephesians to live up to their high vocation, and, above all things, to remain in the unity of the one Church.

First he admonishes them to persevere in unity, secondly, at verse 17 ("This then I say") he instructs them how to remain in ecclesiastical unity.

To induce them to persevere in ecclesiastical unity he makes an appeal to their affection. **Therefore**, because you have received so many benefits from the Lord, you ought to make a return of love ; and in order to do this **I exhort you**. I might indeed command you with apostolic authority ; but I prefer to appeal to your charity, and so I remind you that **I am the prisoner in the Lord**. This pathetic appeal would carry great weight, for three reasons :—

(a) From the compassion they would feel for their beloved Apostle.

(b) They would remember that the Apostle was suffering for their sakes (2 Cor. i. 6).

(c) The sufferings of the Apostle were their glory, and therefore they must do honour to the Father, who had begotten them in Christ. What he beseeches them to do is to reflect on the high dignity of their Christian vocation ; and to walk, that is to live, with corresponding holiness. *Noblesse oblige.* It would be unbecoming in one called to a throne to live like a peasant. As you therefore, says the Apostle, are called to be "fellow-citizens with the Saints" (ii. 19), it would be highly unbecoming to love earthly things and to care only for this world (comp. Col. i. 10 and 1 Peter ii. 9). As St. Bernard aroused himself to fervour in his religious life by constantly saying, "Bernard, why did you leave the world and come here," so ought every Christian to say to himself, "Why did God lead me into the admirable light of His Church? That I might love Christ, and live like Christ.

2. With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity.

As the Apostle is urging the necessity of unity in faith and charity, he notices four vices which tend to destroy unity and recommends the contrary virtues. These vices are pride, anger, impatience, and ill-regulated zeal.

1. To counteract pride he exhorts them to walk with all humility. Pride which makes all desire to

be first and none to submit themselves, must cause dissension and destroy peace; as the Holy Ghost says, "Among the proud there are always contentions" (Prov. xiii. 10). This vice utterly disappears among those who walk **with all humility**. He is not truly humble who is not humble in all things and to all—superiors, equals, inferiors. If a man prefers himself in his own mind before anyone, he does not walk **with all humility**. "The greater thou art, humble thyself the more in all things, and then shalt thou find grace before God" (Ecclus. iii. 20; comp. Phil. ii. 3; James iv. 6).

2. The second vice that destroys union is anger. Those given to anger are always ready to injure others in word and deed and thus to destroy peace. "A wrathful man stirreth up strife; he that is patient appeaseth those that are stirred up" (Prov. xv. 18). Christians therefore are to walk in **mildness**, which calms contention and preserves peace, which comes from Him "Who giveth grace to the meek" (Prov. iii. 34).

3. Impatience is the third vice destructive of union. For sometimes a man may be humble and meek himself and not inclined to trouble others; but cannot bear patiently the injuries done or attempted against him by others. Therefore he recommends **patience**, which "hath a perfect work" (James i. 4) and should accompany humility (comp. Ecclus. ii. 4; Heb. x. 36).

4. Ill-regulated zeal is the fourth vice. When men

judge all they see in others, and desire to correct everything at once without waiting for the proper time and place, they destroy peace and raise disorder. This is frequent among good people; for zeal being virtuous the devil hides himself under it, and as an angel of light deceives the unwary and destroys fraternal concord. "If you bite and devour one another, take heed you be not consumed one of another" (Gal. v. 15). And therefore he here says, **supporting one another in charity**, each one bearing patiently the faults of others, and this in charity which "beareth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7). When a fault is committed it should not always be at once corrected, but it should be mercifully borne with till a favourable time for reproof arrives. At the same time defects of this kind must not be tolerated out of negligence, consent, or carnal friendship, but from a motive of charity (Gal. vi. 12; Rom. xv. 1; Prov. xviii. 19).

3. Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Unity is the object of his whole exhortation, and he desires them to be **careful**, because there is a difficulty in preserving it intact. They must be careful about it as an essential matter. He is not content simply to admonish them to preserve unity, but defines it as the **unity of the Spirit**; for there is a

unity which is evil, and may be called the unity of the flesh, where men unite for wicked ends, as, for instance, in some bad secret society. But the union produced by the grace of the Holy Ghost is holy, and by it men are supported and encouraged in good: it is a reflection of the unity of God Himself, as our Lord teaches by praying to His Father, that His disciples "may be one, even as we are one" (John xvii. 22; Ps. cxxxii. (cxxxiii.) 1).

But how is this unity to be preserved? **By the bond of peace.** Charity is a union of souls. Now just as when material objects are closely united they need some external bond to keep them together, so also must we provide some spiritual bond to keep souls in close union. This bond of peace, which is, says Augustine, the tranquillity of order, implies that each one should have what is his own. This peace is preserved by justice, which gives each one his own, as the prophet says, "The work of justice shall be peace" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

4. **One body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling.**

St. Paul here exhorts them to preserve the double unity of the Church, that of the body and of the Spirit; the exterior and visible unity of the body against schism, the interior and invisible unity of the Spirit against heresy. He thus shows that there is one visible Church which must possess a visible

and corporate unity, and not merely an invisible Church with a spiritual unity only.

There is an implied metaphor taken from the unity that exists in man, which is twofold: (1) the unity of many members making one undivided body; (2) the unity between the body and the soul, forming one man. Both these unities are found in the true Church.

1. All the members of the Church are united in one exterior body, as the various limbs of one man are united in one organic whole. "We being many are one body in Christ" (Rom. xii. 5).

2. All the members of the Church are also united in the second sense by unity of faith and charity, as the whole human body is animated by the same soul. "A body is composed of many members, and one spirit makes all the members live. . . . The duties of the members are different, but one spirit rules all. Many things are commanded and done; one commands, one is obeyed. What our spirit—that is, our soul—is to our members, that the Holy Ghost is to the members of Christ, to the body of Christ, which is the Church. Does this body live? It doth live. Whence? From one Spirit" (St. Aug., Serm. 268, 2).

As you are called in one hope of your calling. The most powerful incentive to keep the unity of the Church intact is to remember that, however much we may otherwise differ, we are all called by the same Lord, all have in him one and the same hope,

eternal happiness, and all are “partakers of the heavenly vocation” (Heb. iii. 1). If anyone asks, Who hath called us, and to what, St. Peter answers that it is “The God of all grace, who hath called us into His Eternal Glory in Christ” (1 Peter v. 10; Apoc. xix. 9).

UNITY OF THE CHURCH

5, 6. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all.

After this earnest exhortation to keep the exterior and interior unity of the one Church the Apostle proceeds to explain the nature of that unity. The Church of God is like a city or commonwealth, and therefore its unity is that of a body composed of different parts in one organic whole, not that of a spiritual substance not made up of parts. In verses 5 and 6 he shows what is common to the whole Church and in verse 7 he notices the peculiar gifts bestowed on each member separately.

In every commonwealth, in order to preserve unity, we find four things common to the whole body politic, namely: (1) one governor; (2) one law; (3) the same outward token, or flag; and (4) the same end and object. As the Church is a spiritual kingdom or commonwealth these four things are found in it. You ought, St. Paul says, to have one body and one spirit, because you are all in the unity of the Church, which is one.

1. **One Lord.** The Church has one leader and ruler, which is Christ; so there is one Lord, not many, whose different wills might cause disunion (Heb. iii. 6; Acts ii. 36; 1 Cor. viii. 6).

2. **One Faith.** The law of the Church is the law of faith (Rom. iii. 27). Now, the word "faith" can be understood in two different senses, either in the sense of the objective truth believed, as when it is said, "This is the Catholic Faith"; or it can be used to denote the subjective habit of faith by which we believe in our souls. In both these senses we can say there is one and only one faith.

(a) In the first sense we are commanded to believe one and the same thing, and to act in the same manner, because one and the same truth is believed by all the faithful, whence the faith is called universal, that is, Catholic (1 Cor. i. 10).

(b) In the second sense also there is one faith, that is, one habit of faith by which all believe; one, that is, in kind, not in number; because one thing ought to be in the heart of all. In this way men are said to be of one will, if they all wish the same thing.

3. One flag. The ensign or flag of the Church is found in the Sacraments of Christ, the first of which is Baptism, which is the door of all the others. So the Apostle adds **One Baptism**. In three ways is Baptism one:—

(1) Because whoever administers Baptism, it is always the one Baptism of Christ (John i. 33).

(2) Because it is given always in the name of the one Holy Trinity (Matt. xxviii. 19).

(3) Because it cannot be repeated. Penance, Marriage, the Eucharist, and Extreme Unction can be repeated, but not Baptism (Heb. vi. 4).

4. One end. In the Church there is one and the same end to be aimed at and desired by all—God Himself. For the Son, Whose Body the Church is, leads us to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 23-25). For this reason does St. Paul say **One God**; and after thus declaring His Unity, of which the unity of the Church is the reflection, he proceeds to describe the infinite dignity of the one God. First he declares Him to be the universal Father, **the Father of all**, thus praising His lovingkindness to us, as the Prophet Isaias exclaims, “Thou, O Lord, art our Father and our Redeemer” (Isa. Ixiii. 16; Mal. ii. 10). Then the infinite dignity and majesty of the one God is shown by the three expressions—**above all, through all, and in us all**.

(a) **Above all**, because His Divine Nature is exalted infinitely above all creatures (Ps. cxii. (cxiii.) 4).

(b) **Through all**, because of His almighty power. “Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord” (Jer. xxiii. 24).

(c) **In us all**, because of the abundance of His Grace, which He, the Giver of all good, bestows upon us. He is in us all by grace (Jer. xiv. 9). St. Jerome applies these three words to the Holy Trinity—the Father is **above all**, because He is the origin and

fount of all ; the Son is **through** all, because through Him all was made ; the Holy Ghost **in** all, for He is poured out into our hearts and we are His temples.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH SHOWN FROM THE
FACT THAT A PROPER AND PECULIAR GIFT
IS BESTOWED ON THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS
(vv. 7-11).

7. **But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ** (comp. Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 11; 2 Cor. x. 13).

Hitherto has the Apostle spoken of what is the common property of the members of the one Church, but his purpose now is to point out that the various members receive special gifts according to their different positions and the functions they have to perform. We have in the Church one God, one Faith, one Baptism, but at the same time different graces bestowed upon particular persons. There is no one who has not been made partaker of divine grace (John i. 16); but this grace is not bestowed on all uniformly and equally, but **according to the measure of the giving of Christ**. Christ, the giver of grace, has measured out according to His Will to each one. One has more, another less, not by fate, nor by chance, nor by merit, but according to the Will of Christ Who distributes it. This is another reason, therefore, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, for all receive different gifts and

graces, and the defect of one is supplied by the other. Christ Himself, the Head, has received grace not in measure, but in all fulness (John iii. 34). The Saints receive the grace of the Holy Spirit in measure (Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. iii. 8; Matt. xxv. 15).*

8. Wherefore He saith, Ascending on high He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men.

St. Paul here quotes Psalm lxvii. (lxviii.) 18 as an authority for what he has said, that each one receives according to the measure of the giving of Christ.

These words of the Psalm, says St. Thomas, refer to three mysteries :

1. The Ascension of Christ.
2. The liberation of the human race.
3. The gift of spiritual graces to men.

The writer of the Psalm represents our Lord under the figure of a King in his chariot going up in triumph. "The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice. . . . Thou hast ascended on high." Owing to the certainty of prophetic knowledge, the mystery is spoken of as if already fulfilled. Thou hast ascended, but not alone, for Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast led captive, as if bound to Thy chariot wheels, those whom the devil had made captive. The Saints

* "If you love unity, you have the advantage of the gifts possessed by each member. Take away envy, and what I have is thine; take away envy, and what thou hast is mine. Jealousy separates, charity unites."—ST. AUG., *Tract. in Joan*, 32, 8.

who had departed before the coming of Christ were still detained as captives in limbo, and when Christ ascended they were liberated and led by Him in a joyful captivity into everlasting freedom (Isa. xlix. 24). But not only these souls are liberated, but the words apply also to the living who have been enslaved by sin (Rom. vi. 16), who have been made by Christ "free from sin and servants to God" (Rom. vi. 22), and so, in a sense, have been led captive, not to their injury, but to their salvation. But not content with freeing men from the hateful yoke of the devil, our Lord is also the source to them of all the rich gifts of grace and glory which His bounty bestows. "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. lxxxiii. (lxxxiv.) 11). "By Whom He hath given us most great and precious promises" (2 Peter i. 4). Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that the words of the Psalm are "Thou hast received gifts in men" instead of "gave gifts to men," because certainly He gave as God and He received as Man, in the faithful, as in His members. He gave in heaven as God, and received on earth, according to that which we find in St. Matthew xxv. 40, "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me."

For the word "he gave" the Hebrew and Greek have "thou hast received." "The best explanation," writes Drach, "of the change of the verb made by the Apostle is this. The word translated 'received' is used sometimes in the Old Testament in the sense

of 'to take, in order to give,' and therefore, shortly, to give. The Chaldaic paraphrase and the Syriac version have the word to give, not receive, in this Psalm. So that in thus changing the word St. Paul probably followed the traditional way in which the Jews understood the passage. We cannot doubt that this verse of the Psalm refers to Jesus Christ. St. Paul is decided on the point. Moreover, this verse being addressed to Jehovah, and the Apostle applying it to our Lord, indirectly proves His Divinity."

Van Steenkiste thus paraphrases verse 18 of Psalm lxvii.: "Thou, O Jehovah, hast ascended on high (up to Mount Sion); Thou hast led back (with Thee) captivity (that is, captives) (as if bound to Thy triumphal chariot); Thou hast received gifts in men, among rebellious men, that is, Thou hast received gifts from men who were enemies; supply, but these gifts which Thine enemies offered in sign of subjection, Thou dost distribute; they are like spoils taken in war to be distributed to Thy soldiers."

9, 10. Now that He ascended, what is it but because He descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

Christ, as God, descended before He could ascend, for nothing is higher than God. He first descended by taking our human nature and becoming Man; and then, as God and Man, He descended into

the lower parts of the earth, when His Body was buried, and His Soul went down into Limbo to release the holy souls who were to accompany Him into heaven (comp. Zach. ix. 11). It was one and the same person Who descended without His Body into Limbo, and after His resurrection ascended in glory and sat down on the right hand of the Father; as our Lord Himself declared, "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from Heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven (John iii. 13). Where, notice that humble souls who voluntarily descend by abasing themselves, ascend spiritually by the power of God, for "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv. 11).

That He might fill all things.

The effect of His Ascension is that all kinds of men are filled with spiritual gifts, according to the words of St. Peter. "Being exalted by the right hand of God He hath poured forth this which you see and hear" (Acts ii. 33).

UTILITY OF DIFFERENT GRACES (vv. 11-14)

ii. **And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors.**

St. Paul now enumerates certain principal offices in the Church for which certain special graces are bestowed by Christ. Compare the parallel passage (1 Cor. xii. 28), in which the Apostle attributes to

God what he here says was the work of Christ, thus most clearly proving, says St. Jerome, that the Father and the Son are one God.

The **Apostles** are first mentioned, because the most highly privileged in grace. They had, St. Thomas teaches, three special gifts to fit them for their sublime office.

(a) A fulness of grace and wisdom, giving them clear understanding of the truths of revelation. "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you" (St. John xv. 15), said our Lord to the Apostles, and "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God" (St. Luke viii. 10).

(b) Supernatural eloquence and power of persuasion in preaching the Gospel, bestowed upon them by our Lord to enable them to obey that command given to them as His last legacy before His ascension. "Going therefore, teach ye all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19), and "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay" (Luke xxi. 15).

(c) An especial power of government over His Church, the plenitude of which He bestowed on St. Peter in the words, "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs" (John xxi. 15-17).

The Apostle proceeds to enumerate three grades or offices in the Church, by which others participated in the gifts bestowed on the Apostles.

(a) **Prophets**, who had the gift either of foretelling future events, as in the case of Agabus (Acts xi. 28; xxi. 10), or at least of explaining and applying the obscure prophecies of the Old Testament (1 Cor. xiv. 1).

(b) **Evangelists**, participating in the second apostolic gift, and who had the office of preaching or even of writing the Gospel, although they were not one of the principal Apostles as St. Mark and St. Luke.

(c) **Pastors**, sharing the third apostolic gift, having care of the Lord's flock ; and also

Doctors, to show that the proper duty of the pastors of the Church is to teach those things which regard faith and morals. These two are joined together, says St. Augustine, "that pastors might understand that to teach is a necessary part of their office" (Jer. iii. 15).

12. For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

These three things are the direct and immediate fruits of the special gifts bestowed on the Apostles and shared in by the Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Doctors. The first effect of these special graces is to render men fit to occupy such exalted offices and to undertake the work of the ministry, and thus Bishops, Priests, and others are enabled to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The second fruit of these gifts is the perfecting

of the Saints, in order to render more perfect in virtue those already justified by faith and charity, for the special duty of prelates is to endeavour to lead on their flock towards perfection.

The edifying of the Body of Christ by the conversion of infidels is the third fruit of the special gifts bestowed on the Apostles. They were able to convert unbelievers by whom the Church, which is the body of Christ, is built up. "Therefore," says St. Jerome, "if a man does not build up Christ's Church, nor instruct the people entrusted to his care, he should not be called pastor or teacher."

13. Until we all meet into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.

St. Anselm and many other writers understand this verse to refer to the future resurrection, and St. Thomas gives this as one meaning of the verse, but the expression into the unity of the one faith seems to make the second interpretation of the Angelic Doctor more natural. "In another sense," he writes, "these words may be understood of the present life, in which all the faithful meet together in the unity of faith and the knowledge of the truth (John x. 16), in which the mystical body of Christ is perfected spiritually after the likeness of the natural body of Christ." The word "occuramus," we may meet together, implies coming from different

directions into one place, that is, from all parts and all circumstances into the Church. The expression the **age of the fulness of Christ** is a Hebrew idiom for *full* age, meaning as Christ grew up to full manhood, His mystical Body the Church and we, the Members of that Body, should grow in spirit, grace, and virtue to full age and vigour.

TWO OBSTACLES—MALICE AND WEAKNESS—PREVENT US ARRIVING AT THE FRUITS OF GOD'S GIFTS. HOW THESE ARE REMOVED (*vv. 14-17*)

14. **That henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.**

The object God had in giving special gifts to the pastors and teachers of His Church was that we might not be like children at the mercy of wicked, crafty, or clever men, believing their ideas and speculations, and like the unstable waves of the sea moved by every wind of error. If we desire to arrive at "the full age of Christ" and to be perfect men, we must "lay aside the things of a child" (1 Cor. xiii. 11). The state of childhood has this characteristic—that it is fixed and determined in nothing, but gives credit to every word. If therefore we wish to show ourselves to be men of perfect age we must cast away all changing, unstable thought,

and not be tossed to and fro. Not carried about with every wind of doctrine, that is, we ought not to be moved by any perverse doctrine which would trouble the heart and ruin the spiritual building. No metaphor could better express the constant variation of men who have no fixed principle of faith than that of the waves moved in every direction by the ever-changing wind. To avoid this misery, Christ gave us the immovable rock of Peter, whose authority in faith and morals is supreme and infallible, and to whom all must submit. Wherever the authority of the Pope is rejected we see all the evils here mentioned, and the little ones of Christ are led astray by the wickedness of men, which is the principle from which all heresy springs, and by cunning craftiness, under the pretence of a love of truth, by which they lie in wait to deceive. The history of the "Variations of Protestantism," which have been multiplied tenfold since the time of Bossuet, is the best illustration of the truth of this verse. How many clever, well-meaning men there are now in England carried about by every wind of doctrine, having no fixed principle of Faith.

15. But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him Who is the Head, even Christ.

If we desire to arrive at the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ we must grow up; but in what must we grow up and increase? In truth and

charity. Truth means every good work, which must be practised and **done**, not simply known (James i. 22); and charity is the very soul of every good work, without which it is nothing (1 Cor. xvi. 14; xiii. 3). And as, in the way of God, not to improve is to fall back, St. Paul adds that we must **in all things** grow up in Him, that is, in Christ, Who is our Head, because we are in the Church, which is the Body.

16. **From Whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what each joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity.**

The increase of the mystical body of Christ in charity is here likened to the growth of a natural human body in which we see the close connection of the different members in one organised whole; the binding together of all parts by sinews and nerves, and the mutual action of the different members one on the other (1 Cor. xii. 15).

From Whom, Christ, Who is our Head, comes the union of the whole body in Christ. Christians of whatever nation, however widely they may differ in other respects, are drawn together into one by the common faith. Each member of the Church acts on the other, each receiving life and spiritual energy from Christ the Head through the efficacious working and overflowing of His grace according to the

measure suited to each member ; that so the whole body may be formed into and built up by charity and mutual help. Faith, Hope, and Charity are the joints uniting the members both with the Head and among themselves : the Sacraments are the veins by which the living spirit and life are carried, and flow from the Head into the members. The nourishment of the mystical body is the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, and the Word of God ; the different ministries and duties of each Christian are the various functions of the members, each one doing its part and serving the others and the Head in Charity.

THE GENTILE LIFE MUST BE ABANDONED

(vv. 17-20)

17. **This then I say and testify in the Lord : that henceforward you walk not as also the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind.**

St. Paul now proceeds to speak of various means to preserve the unity of the Church which he has been describing, and first he warns them not to follow the evil example of the heathen society in which they were obliged to live. He therefore changes the form of his address used in the first verse of the chapter, and instead of saying, "I beseech you," he employs more authoritative words, **I say and testify in the Lord** that it is your duty, as Christians, **not to walk as the Gentiles also walk.** You must not imitate the evil life of the heathens

around you, now that being made clean by the Blood of Christ, you have been called into His admirable light (Gal. v. 25; 1 Cor. xii. 2; Prov. i. 15). The reason of this prohibition is the unhappy state of the heathens who are led, not by right reason, but **by the vanity of their mind**, not directing their life and actions to God, but by self-love, idle gratification, and other things that are mere vanity and emptiness. "Vain are all men who know not God, and who by the good things that are seen could not understand Him that is" (Wisd. xiii. 1). The Greek word translated **mind** means both intellect and will, both of which are mentioned in the next verse. The mind or soul is the ruler of the body; if therefore the mind be given to empty follies, the whole man will be vicious. Some concentrate the whole of their soul on money, others on pleasure, others on pride and ambition, all of which are vain and empty.

18, 19. Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who despairing, have given themselves up to lasciviousness, unto the working of all uncleanness, unto covetousness.

This terrible description of the corruption and misery of the heathen world should make us appreciate more fully the blessing of the Christian faith.

The first part of the verse speaks of the darkness of intellect that was the result of turning away from God; the second of the hardness of heart that was its consequence. Their minds were darkened because the law of God was not "a lamp to their feet, and a light to their paths" (Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 105), and therefore they became alienated from the life of God, that is, from God Who is the life of the soul, and from charity by which the soul lives. This separation from God came **through ignorance** of the Divine Nature, because at that time only "in Judea was God known" (Ps. lxxv. (lxxvi.) 1), "and God indeed having winked at the times of this ignorance, now declareth unto men, that all should everywhere do penance" (Acts xvii. 30). Their understanding became so dark by turning away from the Father of lights that they worshipped idols instead of the one God. The word translated by **blindness** can also be interpreted "hardness," and thus the hardness of heart answers to the darkness of mind, and the same idea is not repeated. St. Ambrose adopts this reading.

The consequence of this darkness and hardness was that **despairing**, destitute of all hope for the next world, they gave themselves to every kind of lasciviousness and uncleanness, with insatiable ardour and unrestrained passion (Osee iv. 10).

Unto covetousness. Here, as in other places, it is possible that St. Paul may intend to couple avarice with impurity, but the meaning of ardently, insatiably,

greedily is far more likely. St. Thomas says, "unto covetousness, that is ardently and with continued and insatiable appetite" (Prov. xxx. 16; 2 Peter ii. 14). St. John Chrysostom and St. Jerome understand the word in the same sense, and most modern writers, as Drach and Van Steenkiste, adopt the same interpretation. Both the authorised and revised Anglican versions give "with greediness."

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST IS CONTRARY TO THE
HEATHEN LIFE

**20, 21. But you have not so learnt Christ; if so
be that you have heard Him, and have been
taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.**

To learn Christ is the one necessary study of a Christian; the one true science without which others will not avail. Of this science the visible school is the Church; the masters are the pastors, doctors, and preachers of the Gospel. The invisible school is our own heart; the interior master, the Holy Ghost; the book written within and without, Jesus Christ. Our whole progress consists in knowledge more and more perfect of our Lord Jesus Christ, for love will follow knowledge, "Let our chief study therefore be to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ."* Those who turn away from the Father of lights teach that there is no life after this one, and therefore give themselves up to sensual pleasure; but the doctrine

* *Following of Christ, i.*

of Christ, which you have learnt, tells you the contrary. **If so be.** The "if," says St. Thomas, stands for "because." No doubt is expressed, or if any is implied, it is as to whether they had heard Christ in the sense of obeying Him; for they had certainly had the faith preached to them in that way in which Christ the Truth really taught it.

22. To put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error.

This is the truth as it is in Jesus, to put off the old man, and to put on the new; for in vain have you heard with your ears the gospel truths, if you do not put off, like a stained and worn-out garment, the old life of vice and put on the virtues of Jesus Christ. The **old man** is the life of sin, following the corrupt inclinations we have inherited by original sin from Adam; and the **former conversation** means the way of life that resulted from following those depraved desires (Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 8). The phrase **according to the desire of error** implies that the desires of the lower man are deceitful, and lead into error, promising happiness but bringing misery. "The desires," says St. Thomas, "that make men err" (Prov. xiv. 8; Wisd. ii. 21).

23, 24. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind : and put on the new man, who according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth.

It is not enough to put off the old man, we must put on the virtues of the new man, Jesus Christ. First he shows through what we are able to arrive at this new life. We may take **the spirit of your mind** to refer to the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us and is the cause of this **renewal**; or to the rational spirit which is to be renewed by grace; and then the spirit of your mind is the rational soul itself. **Be renewed.** That which has not been corrupted needs no renovation, and if Adam had not been corrupted by sin, neither he nor we should have needed renovation; but on account of his corruption both he and we his children need renovation. It is necessary, therefore, that we should be renewed now in this life in our souls, and in the future life in our bodies, when "this corruption will put on incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 53).

Put on the new man. These words explain in what this renovation is to consist. As Adam was the principle or the beginning of the old corruption, and through him sin has entered into us all, so the first principle and beginning of the new life and renovation is Christ, for "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22; Gal. vi. 15; Rom. xiii. 14).

Who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.

These words show in what the renovation is to consist, and they can be understood in three ways. If the "who" refers to the "spirit of the mind," then they mean that the spirit which is our mind, or in other words our soul, was (in Adam) created in original justice, that is, in "newness," or that it is born again by a new creation in order that it may be holy.

But if the word "who" is referred to Christ, the New Man, then the meaning will be **Who is created**, that is, His Human Body was formed in the Virgin's womb, **according to God**, that is, not in the natural way, but by the direct action of the Holy Spirit: or He was created in the order of grace in all fulness of grace; and this **in justice** in regard to men, and **sanctity** in regard to God; His justice and holiness being true and not in appearance only. Or that holiness should be in the heart, truth in the mouth, justice in action.

Put on the new man; that is, says St. Augustine, change your way of life. Formerly you loved this world, now love Christ (Serm. ix. 8). The justification Christ gives us is according to the image and likeness of God, and is a new creation, a second birth, in which the Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of God are displayed even more than in the first. We defaced the image and likeness of God by sin, and the new creation in Christ restores it in true righteousness and holiness.

INTERIOR SINS CORRUPT THE SPIRIT. LYING
AND ANGER

25. **Wherfore putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**

After the general admonition to put off the old man and to put on the new, the Apostle now proceeds to show the particular matters to be reformed. **Wherfore**, in order to put on the new man, the first step is to put away lying, and to gird yourself with truth, for Christ Whom you desire to put on is Truth (Zach. viii. 16). In order to put on Christ, then, let every man speak the truth with his neighbour. And who is his neighbour? "Thy neighbour," answers St. Augustine, "is he who like you has been born of Adam and Eve. Every man, even before he is a Christian, you should regard as your neighbour." The reason given by the Apostle is that we are members one of the other, a reason which applies with the utmost force not only as to Christians united in the one Body of Christ, but also as to all other members of the one human family. So deeply were the early Christians taught to hate untruth, that Justin Martyr was able to write: "Christians would rather die than once to lie."

26, 27. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil.

Be angry, and sin not may be understood in two ways, because there are two kinds of anger—one good, the other evil. Anger is bad when it leads to an inordinate revenge—that is, a vengeance contrary to justice, but it is good when the vengeance sought is rightly ordered—that is, when a man is angry at the right time, in the right measure, and with those who deserve it. If we understand the text of evil anger, then the sense would be, in case evil emotions of anger should arise, do not consent to them. The imperative, for a condition (if you are angry) is a common Hebrew idiom (Matt. v. 22). But if the words are understood to apply to lawful anger or indignation, then the phrase would not be simply permissive, but imperative; be angry, that is, with your sins, for penance is a kind of vengeance on oneself as a sinner, and **sin not again**; take care not to repeat the offence of which you have repented. It is also lawful to be angry with others for their sins; therefore, be angry with the sins of others with holy zeal (Numb. xxv. 11; 3 Kings xix. 14) and sin not, by allowing anger to obscure and carry away reason, but control it with reason (James i. 19). So far St. Thomas; and on this passage Van Steenkiste writes: “The real meaning of the Hebrew text of the Psalm iv. 5 here quoted by the Apostle probably is, Be moved to penitential wrath against your sins, and

do not sin again, to which the other member of the verse answers, What you say in your hearts repent of in your beds, that is in your chambers, examining yourself before God."

Let not the sun go down upon your anger is a proverbial expression, implying immediate restraint of the emotions of anger, or, if it has been indulged, care not to foster it in the heart. Although motions of anger may be tolerated on account of human weakness, delay in them cannot be allowed. On this account, in some Religious Orders, there is a rule that if any offence has been given, pardon should be asked before lying down to rest. It is related of St. John the Almoner, Archbishop of Alexandria, that one day he was rightly indignant with Nicetas, and in the evening he sent one of his clergy with this message, "Reverend Sir, the sun is going to set," at which words Nicetas went in haste to the holy prelate and, asking pardon, they embraced one another. St. Epiphanius also said to St. Hilarion: "Never since I wore this religious habit have I allowed anyone to go to rest without apology who had anything against me, nor have I ever slept with any feeling of resentment against another."

Give not place to the devil, as you certainly will if you do not restrain anger. The devil obtains a place in us by consent to sin (John xiii. 2), and passions, which darken the judgment of reason, incline the soul strongly to consent to evil suggestion. This is especially the case with anger, which quickly

obscures the reason. When the mind is thus disturbed and unbalanced, the devil begins to find a place in us and to incite us to other sins (Eccles. xi. 10).

28. He that stole, let him now steal no more ; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.

The most efficacious method of curing a vice is to practise the opposite virtue, so that honest labour is advised to those who before were given to theft. What he here recommended St. Paul himself practised, as we learn from Acts xx. 33, 34 ; 2 Thessalonians iii. 10.

St. Thomas points out three advantages of manual labour :—

1. Often it is the only means of gaining an honest livelihood ; and therefore he who has not got enough for his support is bound to work (Gen. iii. 19 ; 2 Thess. iii. 10). “If any man will not work, neither let him eat,” which is as much as to say that as a man would sin by not eating what is necessary, so also he would sin by not working. And we may understand it also to mean, that if a man is too idle to work, he does not deserve food. In this way labour is commanded, lest poverty should be an excuse for dishonesty.

2. In order to avoid idleness, the mother of many evils (Ecclus. xxxiii. 29). Those therefore that have

no other employment ought to do manual labour (2 Thess. iii. 11), even if it be not necessary for livelihood.

3. As a means to overcome the flesh and its temptations.

These three reasons are all good, but the first is the principal one, for sloth and impurity can be guarded against in other ways. Here, however, the Apostle proposes a more excellent reason still, namely, that we should work in order to have something to give in charity. When the Apostle warns them **to work the thing which is good**, he may have alluded to some of the trades connected with the temple of Diana, to engage in which might be co-operating in evil, for instance, the making of silver idols of the goddess.

29. **Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth ; but that which is good to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers.**

All evil-speaking is here forbidden, as part of the old man to be put off by the Christian. Evil-speaking includes words against God by blasphemy, false or profane swearing, and using His Name in vain ; against others by calumny, detraction, and backbiting ; against duty to self by lies and idle words. The phrase **that which is good to the edification of faith** is explained by St. Thomas to mean that we should speak in a way that will tend to confirm

the faith of those who are weak. But St. Jerome, in the text used by him, instead of the word translated **of faith**, reads one that means of "necessity" or "opportune words," and therefore understands the passage thus: not only abstain from evil words, but be careful to speak good things according to the necessity of each one, that you may benefit those that listen. Drach and Van Steenkiste adopt this meaning.

CARE NOT TO LOSE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ANY SIN

30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

How can the Holy Spirit, Who is God, be grieved, since no passion can move Him, and no sorrow afflict Him? The Holy Spirit may be said to be grieved when the soul in which He dwells is afflicted (Luke x. 16). Again, in a metaphorical sense we can thus attribute our own passions to God in the same way that the Scripture speaks of Him as angry, because He punishes as if He were moved by wrath. So also in this passage the Holy Ghost is represented as feeling grief, because just as one who is grieved and offended withdraws himself from those wounding him, so also the Holy Ghost withdraws from the sinful soul (Wisd. i. 5).

Whereby you are sealed. The Holy Ghost by the character of Baptism and Confirmation has separated us and marked us as belonging to Him

as a Shepherd marks his sheep. The Holy Ghost, then, must not be driven away, for without Him there is no Life Eternal (2 Cor. i. 22).

The day of redemption, says St. Thomas, is the day of Baptism, because by that Sacrament a man becomes partaker of the redemption wrought by Christ. Others understand it of the day of Resurrection, when God will claim as His own those marked by the Holy Spirit and in His Grace.

31. Let all bitterness and anger, and indignation and clamour, and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice.

In this verse the Apostle indicates various degrees of anger. First there is the feeling of **bitterness** within the heart on account of some real or supposed injury; and if this dark feeling is indulged, **anger** is kindled within the heart, with desire of revenge. This quickly shows itself in the countenance, which is inflamed with **indignation**. Then violent and contemptuous expressions break forth in **clamour**, or even sometimes **blasphemy** or injurious language against God Himself.

32. And be ye kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ.

The Apostle here opposes the Christian virtues to the different degrees of anger. Instead of bitterness,

be kind one to another; instead of allowing anger to excite desires of revenge, be merciful; and in place of that furious rage that would burst forth into clamour and blasphemy, forgive one another (Col. iii. 12; Luke vi. 36). The motive of this Christian forbearance and charity is the example of the Eternal Father, Who in order to forgive us sacrificed His own Son. How often forgiveness costs us little, whereas we must remember that to gain our pardon cost Jesus Christ His Life. We must then imitate Him Who spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

CHAPTER V

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE, CHIEFLY IN CHARITY

1, 2. **Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children: and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.**

THE concluding words of the last chapter were an exhortation to us to forgive, even as God hath forgiven us in Christ; and now St. Paul proceeds to propose for our imitation the example of Christ, God Incarnate, Who is the true model of charity.

You should forgive one another as God has forgiven you in Christ, because thus you will be followers of God Himself, which is the grandest possible thing at which we can aim. Difficult it indeed is for man to imitate God; but though difficult, it is necessary, because human nature can never find perfection save in union with God.

As most dear children. The fact of being God's children makes it necessary to imitate Him as far as we can, because it is the duty of a son to imitate his father. He is our Father by creation (Deut.

xxxii. 6) and by loving adoption, for which reason the title **most dear** children is added. We are most dear to Him because He made us, because He has bought us with a great price, and because we have been chosen for union with Himself, and "to be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). To lessen the difficulty of imitating Him, God became Man in order to show us how to walk; and when exhorting us to follow Him He does not say learn of Me to raise the dead or to walk on the waters, but learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; take up your cross and follow Me.

Walk in love. Walk, that is, always increase and progress in love, for by love are we to imitate God; love is the good which should continually grow within us, and the debt we are constantly to pay to God (Rom. xiii. 8). "Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. iii. 14), and this in order to imitate the example of Christ, **as Christ also hath loved us.** Christ proved the reality and excellence of His charity by what He did by delivering **Himself for us**; for, as St. Gregory says, "The proof of love is not what we say, but what we are willing to do" (Gal. ii. 20; Isa. liii. 12).

As an oblation and sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.

This phrase refers to the sacrifices of the old law (see Lev. iii. and iv.), which were burnt for a sweet savour before the Lord, and were all fulfilled in that of Christ, on which alone their efficacy depended.

Oblation means any offering ; **sacrifice** one in which there was shedding of blood. The savour of these old sacrifices was not pleasing to God in itself, but in as much as it signified the sweet-smelling oblation of the Body of Christ, the Son of God (Gen. xxvii. 27 ; Cant. i. 3). So ought we spiritually to sacrifice ourselves to God in union with Christ (Ps. l. (li.) 19).

OLD WORKS OF THE FLESH TO BE PUT OFF

3, 4. **But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints ; or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose : but rather giving of thanks.**

In the last chapter we saw St. Paul exhorting the Ephesians to put off the old man by avoiding spiritual sins ; now he proceeds to speak of the carnal sins that must be abandoned by those who put on Christ. This exhortation to avoid all impurity has a peculiar force when we remember that the worship of the great temple at Ephesus was mingled with the worst abominations, which the heathens tried to justify, "by vain words," as pleasing to Diana.

The expression **fornication and all uncleanness**, includes every sin against the virtue of purity, whether violating the natural law or not ; but the difficulty is to understand why St. Paul introduces covetousness, or avarice. St. Jerome, followed by many others, explains the word here translated **covetousness** to

mean not avarice, but insatiable lust. The context certainly seems to favour this interpretation, for if it be understood of the inordinate love of money, it is difficult to see why it is introduced between uncleanness and obscenity. Moreover, though it is evident why uncleanness should not be so much as named among Christians, no reason can be assigned why avarice should not be the subject of conversation. The vehement words, **let not such things be named among you**, show the horror that such sins should excite, and how carefully immodest conversation must be avoided, for "in vain," says St. Thomas, "is the contest against internal sins, unless a man hath first conquered external ones, namely, carnal sins, against which the war always endures"; and therefore St. Paul cries out, "let it not be named among you; for it becometh saints," that is Christians, "to abstain from deeds, from thoughts, and from words."

Obscenity St. Thomas considers to mean all manner of evil actions; by **foolish talking** he understands words provoking to evil and suggesting bad thoughts; and by **scurrility**, joking words intended to amuse others, but dangerous to morals (Eccl. ix. 11). We are not to imagine that the Apostle condemns innocent and well-ordered merriment; he forbids only that which is **to no purpose**; for every deliberate word, as well as action, should be for some good end; and we shall have to explain to our Lord the motive of every word and action, that is, *why* we said or did it. "I say to you that every idle word

that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36). To speak of these things from necessity is not wrong, for then there is a good purpose; but when it is from curiosity, morbid gratification, or levity, it is **to no purpose**.

But rather giving of thanks.

The meaning is, that instead of wasting time in talking of foul things as the pagans did, Christians should delight to converse of those subjects likely to increase their gratitude to God for their calling to the faith. St. Paul never tires of exhorting us to give thanks. Our own Blessed Thomas More used often to say in his epigrammatic way, "Heathens and ungrateful men write benefits in the sand, but injuries on marble; Christians should record injuries in sand, benefits on marble."

PUNISHMENT OF VICE: WAYS OF GOD

5. **For know ye this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person, (which is a serving of idols,) hath inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.**

The everlasting punishment of carnal vices is here announced with divine authority, that punishment being exclusion from the Kingdom of Christ and loss of the vision of God for ever. Know this great truth as certain, meditate on it till you understand

it thoroughly, impurity of all kinds shuts a man out of the Kingdom of God. No one who does not repent of these sins and abandon them can inherit with Christ the Kingdom of Heaven. There is the same difficulty here as before about the meaning of the word translated covetousness. St. Jerome interprets it of insatiable lust. Estius is doubtful. St. Thomas adopts the meaning of avarice, inordinate love of money. Natalis Alexander gives the same meaning, which is strongly advocated by Meyer, and favoured by Drach. St. Paul calls this greedy desire of money, or this insatiable love of sensual pleasure, *idolatry*, because men that are given to either put the gratification of their evil desires in the place of God, by making it their last end. We often say that men worship pleasure or money.

Inheritance. In the Epistle to the Romans viii. 17 we are told that the inheritance depends upon being sons of God; "if sons, heirs also, and joint heirs with Christ"; now those who give themselves up to carnal pleasure cease to be children of God, and therefore renounce the inheritance, "for flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God, neither shall corruption possess incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50). The inheritance is God Himself, and the impure and covetous, far worse than Esau, barter this everlasting and supernatural inheritance for the vilest pleasures (Ezech. xliv. 28).

The Kingdom of Christ and of God, because through Christ, and through Him only, can we enter

into the possession of God, and enjoy Him for ever. Natalis Alexander considers the Greek words to mean "the kingdom of Christ, Who is God." "And" is sometimes used for "who" (*vide* Beelen, *Gram. Græc. N.T.*, § 18, 4 ann.). Van Steenkiste adopts the same meaning, and thus understood, the passage is a clear assertion of the Divinity of Christ.

6, 7. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers with them.

From the beginning, says St. Thomas, have men tried to find reasons by which they might indulge their impure passions, endeavouring to convince themselves and others that these things are not wicked. But all these excuses are merely **vain words**, without real reason and truth. It is manifest that these excuses are vain and deceptive, because God punishes these things; and unless they were sinful they would not be punished by God, for being just He cannot punish except where sin has been committed. St. Paul shows that they are punished by the words **because of these things cometh the anger of God on the children of unbelief**, as is evident in the flood (Gen. vi.); also in the destruction of Sodom (Gen. xix.); and in the almost total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin (Judges xx.). Here men should seriously reflect that if those who had not the blessing of the Christian faith were

punished so severely for these sins, how much more terribly those will be punished who sin in the full light of the faith, or who refuse to believe, in order to be free to indulge their evil passions. "Nothing," says St. Jerome, "so kindles the anger of God as to see a sinner erect and stiffened with pride, refusing to prostrate himself in repentance, and to ask for pardon and mercy."

Be ye not therefore partakers with them by communicating with them in such wickedness, lest you partake of their punishment. "Bear not the yoke with unbelievers; for what participation hath justice with injustice? or what fellowship hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?" (2 Cor. vi. 14).

THOSE WHO HAVE PUT ON CHRIST SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SIN

8. For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.

Another reason for not imitating the heathen in carnal sins is the contrast between the past darkness of the Ephesian converts and the light that had been given. No metaphor is more common in the Scripture than that of light to express faith and darkness to denote the sinful mind without faith. Christ is the light of the world, and those who believe in Him and worship Him as God, live in the

light that shines from His countenance (Prov. iv. 18, 19). To make the contrast more emphatic the Apostle does not simply say, you were in darkness, but you **were darkness**, and now **are light**, not **the Light**, for that is Christ alone ; but you are light by participating in His brightness, and therefore he adds **in the Lord**, to show that the light is from Him.

8, 9. Walk ye then as children of the light. For the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth.

Because you are now light you should do the works of the light ; therefore live as children of the light, which is accomplished by imitating Christ (John viii. 12). To walk as children of the light our various actions **must be**—first, good in themselves ; second, they must be performed with a right intention.

The fruit of the light means the effect in our lives of living in the light and being led by it. The three fruits enumerated—**goodness, justice, and truth**—perfect us in our threefold duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. Goodness regards ourselves, justice our neighbour, truth our Creator, Who is the God of Truth, through the knowledge and confession of truth. Or we may refer goodness to the heart, justice to the external work, truth to words.

10. Proving what is well-pleasing unto God.

To do what is in itself good, because it is well-pleasing to God ; in other words, to do God's Will,

because it is His Will, and in the way He wills, is to act perfectly. The whole work of the spiritual life is to do this in every deliberate action, not acting blindly or from impulse, but by reflection, "proving each one his own work," and thus doing the good, the acceptable, and the perfect Will of God (1 Thess. v. 21; Gal. vi. 4; Rom. xii. 1, 2).

11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

By these words St. Paul exhorts his hearers not to return to the darkness they had left, "for if I build up again the things I have destroyed, I make myself a prevaricator" (Gal. ii. 18; 2 Peter ii. 22). We must take care, therefore, in the first place not to co-operate with the sins of others, **have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**, that is, with impure and carnal works which lead to eternal darkness, which is everlasting separation from God. Such works are emphatically unfruitful, for they can give only a momentary pleasure, most quickly passing away, and leaving no fruit. "What fruit therefore had you in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death" (Rom. vi. 21). There is also another metaphor in the idea, because as light is necessary for plants to bring forth fruit, so these things, done without God and against His Will, cannot bear any spiritual fruit for eternity. Those who love such sins, the foulness of which degrades

them to the level of brute beasts, seek dark places to hide their shame (Job xxiv. 15 ; Eccl. xxiii. 26).

Have no part, then, with anyone in these works of death, help not others in evil, consent not to it ; but even this is not enough unless you also **reprove them** for the evil they do, for "God has given to every one commandment concerning his neighbour" (Eccl. xvii. 12). This may suggest the question whether we always sin if we do not reprehend others when they do evil ? Not, replies St. Augustine, if a charitable fear prevent us, in cases, for instance, where we judge that the reproof would do harm rather than good. But if we abstain from rebuking evil where good would result, and that only from selfish fear of giving offence or losing a person's favour, we should sin. The Greek word here translated **reprove** means also to disclose or to make known.

A REASON FOR NOT COMMUNICATING WITH THE WORKS OF THE GENTILES

12. For the things that are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of.

We here have the reason for the warning of the preceding verse against joining in the deeds of the ungodly Gentiles around them, which is that the things perpetrated by them in secret are too shameful even to be mentioned by Christian lips. The Apostle probably refers among other things to the infamous worship of Diana in the temple of Ephesus.

13. **But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for all that is made manifest is light.**

On this verse, the meaning of which is obscure, St. Thomas thus writes. St. Paul wishes to prove what he said in verse 11—that Christians ought to reprove the wicked deeds of the heathen. He argues thus: whatever is reproved is shown to be evil, for every reproof is a kind of manifestation; but all manifestation is made by light, and you are light. It is therefore your duty to reprove the wicked things the Gentiles do and to make them manifest. The major of the argument is, "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light." The minor is formed by the words, "All that is made manifest is light." The conclusion is, therefore you ought to reprove these wicked things, according to the words, "The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor. ii. 15).

Van Steenkiste thus paraphrases this verse: "These things reprove; for all sins which are blamed by holy men are seen at once to be evil, and sometimes are changed into good (by the conversion of the ill-doer); for everything is made luminous (or brought to light) by the very fact of being discovered and made visible." So that St. Paul means to say, "Physical objects which are discovered and brought into the light are made visible, and even themselves luminous, reflecting the light; so also in spiritual things, sinners, when the light of good men shines

upon them (by charitable reproof, good example, etc.) are themselves often made just and holy. The reason why you should reprove sinners is to try and convert them by your kind admonitions." Drach agrees with this interpretation, for he says, "The Apostle means that the effect of reproving the heathen will be to drag their evil deeds into the light, and thus by putting those who do them to shame to prepare them for repentance."

14. Wherefore he saith: Rise thou that sleepeth, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee.

Who is it that saith this? The words as quoted by St. Paul occur nowhere in the Bible, and therefore it has been conjectured by some that St. Paul was quoting from another writing well known to those he was addressing. But the more common opinion considers that he is alluding to the words of Isaias Ix. 1, "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." If so, the Apostle has merely taken the idea of the prophet, and varied the words to suit his own context more nearly. St. Thomas says, "The gloss explains these words as if St. Paul said Light, that is, the Holy Ghost, cries out, Rise, thou that sleepeth. But this," continues the holy Doctor, "is not according to St. Paul's custom, and therefore it is better to say that the Apostle introduced a figurative expression suggested by the words of Isaias Ix. 1,

‘Arise, be enlightened,’ etc.” **Wherefore he saith**, that is, the prophet in Scripture saith, Arise, thou that sleepeth, from the slumber of negligence in good works, as it is written in Proverbs vi. 9, “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou rise out of thy sleep?” **and arise from the dead**, that is, from works that are dead or which bring death (Heb. ix. 14). **And Christ will enlighten thee**. “The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear?” (Ps. xxvi. (xxvii.) 1). But can we of ourselves arise from sin? I answer, says St. Thomas, that for the justification of a sinner two things are necessary—grace and free will co-operating with grace. Free will is first moved by grace going before the act (*a gratia præveniente*), and afterwards acts meritoriously by grace following the first movement (*a gratia sub sequente*). Whence it is said by Jeremiah, “Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted” (Lam. v. 21).

WALK CAUTIOUSLY, FOR THE DAYS ARE EVIL

15, 16. **See then, brethren, that you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

To walk circumspectly is to live cautiously, and “caution,” says St. Thomas, “is a certain condition of prudence by which a man avoids difficulties in practical matters.” This caution everyone ought to use; it is a part of wisdom. “The eyes of the wise

man are in his head ; the fool walketh in darkness " (Eccles. ii. 14). Prudence and caution, so necessary at all times, were peculiarly needful in those early days when unwise actions might excite persecution against the whole Church.

Redeeming the time means using well every opportunity we have of doing good works and gaining merit, and not allowing time that will never return to pass away idly and uselessly. We should value time, by which we can gain eternity, as much as if we had to purchase or redeem it by a great price. If a man has spent a large portion of his life in sin, he has lost all that time ; and in the little space that remains to him before the great day of account, he must endeavour to repair the past by redoubling his efforts to do all the good works in his power for the pure love of God (1 Peter iv. 3).

For the days are evil ; therefore use every opportunity of doing good. " From the day on which Adam fell and was banished from Paradise, the days have been always evil " (St. Aug., Hom. 10), but especially was this the case when St. Paul wrote, for then the corruptions of pagan society had reached their worst point, and made the time emphatically evil.

17. Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the Will of God.

Those who meditate constantly on the law of God, and can truly say, " I have loved Thy law, O Lord ;

it is my meditation all the day long" (Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 97) are the truly wise. The only wisdom is to strive to understand thoroughly and to perform perfectly the holy Will of God. Therefore the Apostle warns us not to become unwise by neglecting to learn or refusing to do the Will of God. The first principle by which we ought to judge of things and to regulate them in practice is the "good, acceptable, and perfect Will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). And if this be really the principle of action, the mind is guided by prudence, which is wisdom applied to the practical things of life. "O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end" (Deut. xxxii. 29).

ABSTAIN FROM WINE; BE FILLED WITH THE
HOLY GHOST

18. **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury;
but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Having already warned them against impurity, St. Paul proceeds to condemn excess in wine, which is a common cause of impurity, and therefore a thing that must be carefully avoided by all who desire to live chastely according to the will of God. "Wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkenness riotous; whosoever is delighted therewith shall not be wise" (Prov. xx. 1). The Prophet Osee also couples together intemperance and impurity in the words "Fornication and wine and drunkenness take away

the understanding" (Osee iv. 11). St. Jerome says plainly, "I shall never consider a drunkard to be a chaste man . . . say what you will; I speak according to my conscience" (*ad Titum*, cap. i.). In another place the same Father reminds us that "Lot, who was not conquered by the example of Sodom, was overcome by wine."

But be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Instead of exciting the animal nature with much wine, fill the soul with the Holy Ghost, Who gives fervour of devotion, and makes men "in spirit fervent" (Rom. xii. 11). Another effect of the presence of the Holy Spirit is joy and spiritual gladness; "justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

19, 20. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father.

St. Paul here opposes the chaste and holy joy which results from the interior influence of the Holy Spirit, to the riotous mirth of the drunkard; the psalms and hymns of the one to the ribald songs of the other. When Christians assemble on festive occasions, he teaches, instead of injuring body and soul by excess in meat and wine, they should take delight in holy conversation and in singing psalms and hymns, especially about Christ and the blessing

of belonging to Him. The ancient Hebrews were accustomed to have music at their banquets and festive gatherings, and we see a trace of this custom in the words, "Wine and music rejoice the heart, but the love of wisdom is above them both" (Ecclus. xl. 20), as also in what is said of Josias, "His memory shall be sweet as honey in every mouth, and as music in a banquet of wine" (Ecclus. xlix. 2). In another chapter the sacred writer says, "A concert of music in a banquet of wine is as a carbuncle set in gold. As a signet of an emerald in a work of gold: so is the melody of music with pleasant and moderate wine" (Ecclus. xxxii. 7). The Prophet Isaias reproached the Jews because, though "the harp and the lyre and the timbrel and the pipe, and wine are in your feasts," still "the work of the Lord you regard not, nor do you consider the works of His Hands" (Isa. v. 12).

At the Last Supper Christ and His Apostles sang a hymn,* and the early Christians, imitating this example, in their love-feasts and other gatherings were accustomed to have music and songs, not pro-

* This hymn was probably Psalm cxiii. from the ninth verse, "Not unto us, O Lord" (which in Hebrew is the first verse of Psalm cxv.), Psalms cxiv., cxv., and cxvi. (Heb. cxvi. and cxvii.). This is probable, because it was the custom of the Jews to sing this after the Paschal Supper. Before it, or rather before the second cup was passed round, they sang Psalm cxii., *Laudate, pueri* (Heb. cxiii.), and cxiii. (Heb. cxiv.) down to verse 9. The others were sung after the supper, that is, after the fourth cup had been passed round. The whole, before and after, was called "the Hallel," that is, The Praise. Hallel is the first syllable of Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

fane, but sacred hymns in praise of God. Tertullian (second century) describes these Christian feasts in the thirty-ninth chapter of his *Apology* as follows: "Before the company has sat down to eat, prayer to God is poured forth. Food is taken as far as hunger requires; drink in a measure that is useful for those who desire to preserve purity. Christians feast in a way that befits men who remember that by night as well as by day God should be adored; they speak as those should who know that the Lord listens. After washing the hands with water, lights are brought in, and then each one is invited to sing in praise of God, either using the words of Holy Scripture or his own words, and by this is shown the temperance with which each one has drunk."

The early Fathers tell us also that it was the custom of Christians to sing pious hymns to Christ for recreation. Thus St. Basil describes the peasants as chanting the *Gloria Patri*; and St. Jerome tells us of the ploughman cheering himself by singing "Alleluia," and of the tired reaper singing psalms (Corn. à Lapide).

Singing and making melody in your hearts.

Singing in praise of God should be a service of the heart and not of the lips only; and so St. Jerome writes that "from these words, those whose duty it is to chant psalms in the Church should understand that they should sing the praises of God with the heart as well as with the voice."

The Apostle exhorts Christians to spiritual joy and

gladness, to be always joyful and trying to inspire others with feelings of joy, love, and thanksgiving. This spiritual joy, one of the fruits of the Holy Ghost, is a sign of His Presence. To those who possess this joyful spirit nothing is difficult, nothing troubles their heart; they count it all joy when they fall into divers tribulations. St. Dominic and St. Philip Neri are special instances among the Saints of this fruit of the Holy Ghost.

Giving thanks always for all things, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father.

Here St. Paul teaches us the practical lesson he so constantly dwells upon in his Epistles, exhorting us to give thanks to God, not only in time of prosperity, but always, at all times, and not only for the things we naturally like, but for those we dislike. **For all things, at all times,** is the rule for thanksgiving. Everyone can say, Thank God, when all goes well; but it requires true virtue to thank God in time of trial and suffering. In time of prosperity we thank Him for doing our own will; but if we are thankful in times of suffering and adversity we are thanking Him for doing His own Will. In time of suffering, therefore, whether in body or mind, we must rise above nature and say, "I thank Thee, O God, for doing Thy own Will, in Thy own way, because it is Thy Will."

St. Thomas notices from these words of the Apostle (*vv. 18-20*) that there are three effects which follow from being **filled with the Holy Ghost.** All

Christians have received the Holy Ghost in Baptism and the other sacraments ; but not all, even of those who live in a state of grace, can be said to be **filled** with the Holy Ghost. A man may have the Holy Spirit, but not be guided by His Grace in every act. But to be **filled** with the Holy Ghost is to use His Grace and be guided by it generally in all deliberate actions, and this fulness of the Holy Ghost will show itself by love to God and man. The three effects which follow from being filled with the Holy Spirit (which is the gift of God) are (1) Spiritual meditation ; (2) Spiritual joy and gladness ; (3) Thanksgiving.

1. *Spiritual meditation.* **Speaking to yourselves**, that is, to your own souls, in the silent interior conversation that each one constantly holds with himself ; **in psalms**, that is, using the words of the psalms (which for this purpose ought to be learnt) in our interior conversation, instead of idle or hurtful thoughts. We should meditate therefore on right, practical conduct to see what we ought to do, on the praises of God to judge what we should imitate, on heavenly joy to see how we should serve God.

2. *Spiritual joy.* By frequent meditation the fire of charity is kindled in the heart, "My heart grew hot within me, and in my musing a fire shall flame forth" (Ps. xxxviii. (xxxix.) 4); and thus spiritual joy springs up in the heart. By **singing and making melody** in the heart to the Lord our affections are filled with spiritual joy, which inclines us to undertake good works (1 Cor. xiv. 15 ; Col. iii. 16).

3. *Thanksgiving.* Meditation and spiritual joy enable the soul more clearly to see, and more humbly to acknowledge, that everything comes from God. For the nearer the soul approaches God and knows Him, the more does it see His greatness and its own nothingness in comparison with God, as Job says, "With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee, therefore I reprobate myself and do penance in dust and ashes" (Job. xlvi. 5). Therefore should we thank God **always, for all things**, for all are gifts of His goodness, whether in prosperity or adversity. "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be always in my mouth (Ps. xxxiii. (xxxiv.) 1; James i. 2; Acts v. 41).

This thanksgiving is to be offered in the **Name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, because all good things come to us through Him (Rom. v. 1).

To God and the Father. To God, Who is our Creator. To the Father, for He has sent Christ to us, and through Him hath regenerated us. And thus we thank God for the gifts of nature, and the Father for those of Grace.

WOMEN TO BE SUBJECT TO THEIR HUSBANDS,
WHO ARE EXHORTED TO LOVE THEIR WIVES
AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH (vv. 21-28)

21. Being subject one to another, in the fear of Christ.

This is one effect of being filled with the Holy Spirit; it makes men humble and charitable, subject

one to another, in the fear of Christ, that is, not on account of mere human fear, but to please Christ our Lord.

22. Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord.

After laying down, in verse 21, the general principle that we should humble ourselves in dealing with others, the Apostle proceeds to exhort particular persons in different states of life. He chooses the three chief relations that make up the family, namely, husband and wife, father and children, master and servants.

Beginning with the case of married women, he exhorts them, as the great duty of their state of life, to be subject to their husbands. The subjection of a wife to her husband should be for the love of Christ, obeying him as if in him she were obeying Christ the Lord. Where the husband is in subjection to the wife, the natural order is reversed; and we find it written in Ecclesiasticus, "A woman, if she hath superiority, is contrary to her husband" (xxv. 30).

The reason assigned by St. Paul for this subjection of the wife to the husband is that the husband is the head of the wife; and the example brought forward is that of the obedience of the Church to Christ, her Head.

23. Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the Church.

The husband, according to the teaching of the Apostle, stands in the same relation to his wife as Christ does to the Church as the Head to the body, which it rules and guides. Christ is Head of the Church, not for his own advantage, but for that of the Church, for **He is the Saviour of His Body.**

24. Therefore (the conclusion is) as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things.

Christ is the Head of the Church, because He gives it life, cherishes, governs, and protects it from dangers. So also should the husband cherish and protect his wife as well as govern her. The subjection of the Church to Christ her Head is entire, perpetual, and loving; and such also ought to be that of wives to their husbands **in all things**, unless, as St. Thomas remarks, anything be commanded contrary to the law of God. No stronger words could be used to impress upon wives the duty of obedience to their husbands.

25. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it.

Turning to the husband, the Apostle points out the spirit in which he is to rule his wife and govern his family. It must be in a spirit of love. The wife,

though subject, is not a slave, to be ruled by fear, but a part of himself, to be cherished in love. The head and the body are one. His love, moreover, must be concentrated on his own wife ; for if he should allow the love of others to possess his heart, every evil will result to himself and his family. But a true love for his wife will sweeten all the trials of a married life in those that "love their wives, and are not bitter towards them" (Col. iii. 19).

The same exalted reason and example is held up before the husband, namely, that of the perfect union of love between Christ and the Church. How forcibly this implies the Unity of the Church, and how utterly the meaning of the comparison would be lost, if we could imagine that Christ loves and cherishes schismatical and heretical sects and separated churches, as well as His one Spouse, the holy and undivided Catholic Church. If Christ could love sects as well as His Church, the argument of the Apostle in the passage before us would imply that husbands may, and even ought, to love other women as well as their own wives.

What was the sign and measure of Christ's love for the Church? St. Paul tells us by the words **He loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it.**

The sign of His love was to deliver Himself up to a hard, laborious, self-sacrificing life for the Church, and at last to deliver Himself up to death, even to the death of the Cross. In like manner a Christian husband, if his love for his wife be sincere, will show

it by brave and constant self-sacrifice ; and as it will be a rare case in which he will have occasion to shed his blood or give up his life to prove that his love is genuine, his self-sacrifice must be shown in the daily details of life, labouring for her, and giving up his own desires and pleasures to promote her happiness. Many selfish husbands would do well to meditate on this teaching of the Apostle.

26, 27. That He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life ; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

For what end and object did Christ deliver Himself for the Church ? In order that He might sanctify and make it holy, so that its abiding holiness is the fruit of His Precious Blood ; " Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own Blood, suffered without the gate " (Heb. xiii. 12). This is the effect of the death of Christ. But the effect of this sanctification is the cleansing of the Church from the stains of sin, therefore the words, **cleansing it by the laver of water**, immediately follow, and this washing with water has its power to cleanse by virtue of the Passion of Christ, for " we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death. For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death " (Rom. vi. 3 ; comp. Ezech. xxxvi. 25 ; Zach.

xiii. 1). This washing "of the sinner in the fountain open to the house of David" is **in the word of life**, which being applied to the water (in baptism) gives it the power of cleansing sin from the soul" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

The end and object of sanctification is the purity of the Church, and therefore he adds, **that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle**; for it would be unbecoming that the sinless Bridegroom should espouse to Himself a spouse stained with sin, and therefore He presents it to Himself immaculate—here, in the world, by grace; hereafter, in the world to come, by glory, to which future state the word **glorious** particularly points; glorious through brightness of soul and body (Phil. iii. 21). Therefore also, referring to the future glory, St. Paul adds, **not having spot or wrinkle**, that is, no defect or suffering, **or any such thing**, but **that it should be holy and without blemish**, holy, that is, by confirmation in grace, and **without blemish** by being free from all uncleanness. All these things will be perfectly fulfilled in the Church triumphant in Heaven.

But it may be asked whether these sublime expressions refer also to the Church militant on earth, although such a large proportion of her members live in sin and are defiled by so many disorders? Is the Church **holy, without spot or wrinkle, without blemish**, in spite of all this? In answer we must remember that though the members of the Church

are human and imperfect, the Church looked at in itself and as the Body of Christ is divine, and therefore the imperfections of individual members do not prevent it from being holy, though they often obscure its holiness from the eyes of men. And as it is glorious to follow Our Lord, even here below, the Church may be called glorious because it does follow Him, and without spot or wrinkle, because it is His Body, and cannot fall into error and be separated from Him.

Moreover, even considered as a society of men, the Church remains holy in spite of the sins and shortcomings of so many within it, because Christ and His Saints, who are the chief and most important part of the Church, are holy; because the doctrine of the Church always remains holy; and because the Church always contains the means of holiness. Thus London can rightly be called a rich city, though so many within it suffer extreme poverty, and the University of Oxford or Cambridge may justly be called learned, though many of their members may have a very scanty share of that learning.

The conclusion therefore is—

28. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

Note on the words **the word of life** in verse 26. St. Thomas, as we have seen above, and with him many high authorities, as St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Anselm, understand these words as

referring to the form of baptism, **the laver of water**, indicating the matter of the sacrament. Cornelius à Lapide interprets the words in the same way, and the sense seems to suit the text admirably. Van Steenkiste, however, though he interprets **the laver of water** to mean baptism, prefers the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Jerome, who consider **the word of life** to refer to the preaching of the Word of God. The words **of life** appear to be a gloss, not in the original text. If **the word** meant the form of Baptism, says Van Steenkiste, the article would have been used in the Greek.

MARRIED PEOPLE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER
BECAUSE THEY ARE NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE

28-30. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.
For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church; because we are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones.

The Apostle in this passage proves the obligation of husbands to love their wives by another argument. In verse 25 he compared the love of a man for his wife to the love of Christ towards the Church; now he shows that, as husband and wife are one, a man in loving his wife loves himself.

A husband and wife are in a certain sense one; whence as the body is subject to the soul, so the wife

to the husband ; but as no one hates his own flesh, therefore the husband must not hate, but love, his wife. **He that loveth his wife loveth himself** (Matt. xix. 5). As, therefore, a man would sin against nature who hated himself, so also if he hated his wife. A man shows his love to his body by **nourishing and cherishing it**, for the test of love is what we do ; and in the same way is love for a wife to be manifested.

Why, then, does Christ say, "If any man come to Me and hate not his . . . wife . . . he cannot be My disciple" ? (Luke xiv. 26). There is no real contradiction, because Christ means by hating father and mother and wife, that we must not love them in a way that would interfere with our love for God, which must be so supreme that we must be ready to sacrifice father or mother or wife or our own life, rather than separate ourselves from Him.

The example of the love of Christ for the Church is again brought forward, for the Church is the Body of Christ ; and in loving the Church Christ loves Himself. The Apostle uses the strongest possible expression to denote how true and intimate this union is, saying, **We are members of His Body, of His Flesh, of His Bones.**

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE, WHICH ST. PAUL
INTERPRETS OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

31-33. **For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear her husband.**

St. Paul now brings the authority of the Scripture to enforce the obligation a man is under to love his wife. The words quoted by the Apostle are those of Adam after God had created Eve for his companion. "And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman; and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii. 22-4).

These words are quoted by our blessed Saviour in His instruction about marriage addressed to the Pharisees (Matt. xix. 5), but He there attributes them to God, whereas in Genesis we find that Adam spoke them. The explanation is that Adam spoke under the inspiration of God. God therefore spoke by inspiring and teaching Adam.

In this passage three kinds of intimate union between a man and his wife are noticed.

The first is that of singular love, which is so great that it makes each ready to leave their parents and their father's house: "wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife."

The second union is that of companionship and constant intercourse: "he shall cleave to his wife" (Ecclus. xxv. 2).

The third union is in the flesh: "they shall be two in one flesh."

This is a great sacrament, that is, a great mystery, for a sacrament is an outward sign of some spiritual and invisible thing; and this union of husband and wife is the sign of the union of Christ and the Church, of which it is the type.

These words do not prove that Christian marriage is a sacrament, for St. Paul does not say this; but that there is a mysterious likeness between the union of marriage and the union of Christ and the Church.

We know, however, by the authority of the Church, that marriage is one of the seven Sacraments (Trid. Sess. xxiv. can. i.).

St. Thomas notices that there are four Sacraments that may be called great—Baptism, by reason of its effects, because it blots out sin, and opens the Kingdom of Heaven; Confirmation, by reason of the Minister, because it can only be administered by a Bishop; the Eucharist, by reason of what it contains, for it contains the whole Christ, God and Man; lastly, Marriage, by reason of its signification, because it signifies the union of Christ and the Church.

According to the mystical interpretation, then, the words above quoted from Genesis should be understood of Christ leaving His Father, inasmuch as He was sent into this world and became Man, "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world" (John xvi. 28), and His Mother, that is, the synagogue, and cleaving for ever to His Bride, the Church, to whom He said, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

The argument of the Apostle is seen by explaining the example he brings according to the literal sense. For there are some things in the Old Testament which are said about Christ only, as, for instance, that of the Psalm, "They have dug My Hands and My Feet: they have numbered all My Bones" (Ps. xxi. (xxii.) 17), and that of Isaias, "Behold a virgin shall conceive" (Isa. vii. 14). Certain other things can be explained of Christ and of others, though principally of Christ and of others in the figure of Christ, as in these words from Genesis. Primarily, therefore, should this text be explained of Christ, and afterwards of others: and therefore the Apostle says, **Nevertheless let every one of you in particular (or severally) love his wife as himself**, as if he should say, The words of Genesis are said principally of Christ; and if they do not apply to Him alone, it is because they are to be explained of others and fulfilled in others in the figure of Christ.

As himself. Each one should love himself, but in

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a way that does not interfere with his love to God, his last end; and in the same way should he love his wife, taking care not to allow that love to betray him into sin (Luke xiv. 26).

And what is the duty of the wife? **Let the wife fear her husband**, not indeed with servile fear, but with the fear of reverence and subjection, because she ought to be subject to him.

CHAPTER VI

I. LOVE OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS

1-3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is just. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

AFTER instructing husbands and wives in their duties to one another, St. Paul now considers the second family relation of parents and children; and first addressing the latter, he says, **Children, obey your parents in the Lord.** By the law of nature, enforced by divine precept, parents are bound to instruct their children; and children are under a natural obligation of obedience to their parents. Whence the peculiar duty of children is obedience; and in a parallel passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle says, "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord" (Col. iii. 20).

The only limit to this obedience in all things is expressed by the words **in the Lord;** for no one should obey in matters clearly against the command

of God: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29).

St. Paul lays down two reasons for this obligation of respectful obedience—one drawn from considerations of justice; the other from motives of practical utility and self-interest.

As to the justice of the command it is evident, and may be shown by the fact that it is ordained by God Who can enjoin nothing unjust (Exod. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16; Ecclus. iii. 3-18).

Honour includes reverence, love, and obedience; and where it is necessary, help and support in temporal things. These things children owe their parents—reverence as to their elders, obedience as to their teachers, help and assistance as to those who have taken care of them in their tender years.

The utility of observing this commandment is proved by the divine promise made to those who keep it, that their life shall be long and prosperous. The commandment stands the first in the second table, because our first duty to others is to our parents, from whom, under God, we have our very being. And it is also the first that contains a promise to those who fulfil the precept. The promise, being made to the Jews, is a promise of temporal prosperity, long life, and temporal happiness—blessings that are also types of the reward of spiritual life and happiness for ever in heaven (Prov. iii. 2).

It may be objected here that many devoted children die early; and how is the promise of God

then fulfilled? The answer is that temporal prosperity and long life may not always be real blessings. They are not in themselves necessarily good things; they ought to be considered good only as far as they promote and lead on to spiritual things. Prosperity, therefore, is not good if it lessens virtue. Long life is only good if it is employed in the service of God; and therefore it is sometimes not given to dutiful children lest it might turn to their disadvantage. "For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs. And a spotless life is old age. He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners, he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul . . . being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased God: therefore He hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities. But the people see this, and understand not, nor lay up such things in their hearts" (Wisd. iv. 8-14).

Those, therefore, that are beloved of God often die early; yet the promise is truly fulfilled in them, for the good Spirit of God leadeth them into the land of true happiness, and quickens them for His own sake with everlasting life. He brings their soul out of prison; and they give thanks to His Name. Compare Psalm cxlii. (cxliii.) 10 and cxli. (cxlii.) 8.

4. **And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger: but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.**

Turning now to parents, the Apostle warns them to do their duty to their children. First, he forbids too great severity which would only provoke to anger and even hatred against parents and which would result in discouragement (Col. iii. 21). This admonition was greatly needed at a time when the authority of the father was arbitrary and often tyrannically used. But at all times is it necessary for those in authority, if they desire obedience and respect, to take care not to provoke angry opposition by unreasonable commands, or by suspicious interference with due liberty.

The English equivalent to the phrase "bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord" would be, "Give them a good Christian education." Discipline would refer to good instruction, correction to warning them against evil, and all this "in the Lord," according to the principles of religion. The revised English version translates the passage, "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."

2. DUTIES OF SERVANTS AND MASTERS

We must remember that the Apostle was speaking not to servants in the modern sense, but to slaves who belonged to their masters as horses to their owners. Yet he does not counsel rebellion (though

slavery is so unchristian an institution), because he knew that before it could be abolished Christian truth and the principles of Christian life must make society free with the true freedom of Christ. He therefore exhorts them to do their duty in the state in which their lot was cast, and from which they could not escape, and cries out—

5. **Servants, be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ.**

Make a virtue of the necessity of your condition, and serve your masters with obedience, with respect, implied by **fear and trembling, and with simplicity or singleness of heart.** **As to Christ.** Simplicity or singleness of heart implies what we call “purity of intention,” looking to Christ, obeying and reverencing Him, in the persons of their masters. From Christ the Lord is all power and authority; and therefore servants should obey as to Christ Himself in all that is not contrary to the faith or commands of Christ.

- 6, 7. **Not serving to the eye (or with eye service), as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord and not to men.**

A servant whose obedience makes him serve his master only when he is watched and through fear of

punishment has not the right intention. The intention should be directed to Christ, "as the servants of Christ," and to the hearty carrying out of the Will of God through love to Him; and thus having the intention of serving the Lord and not merely a human master.

8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

To encourage them to obedience to bondmasters, who were so often cruel and unjust, the Apostle bids them remember how generously Almighty God will reward in the World to come everything, however small in itself, if only it be done for Him (Matt. x. 42); and will bestow this reward on everyone without respect of persons, whether **bond or free** (Gal. iii. 28; Acts x. 34).

9. And you masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatenings: knowing that the Lord both of them and of you is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with Him.

These words must have sounded strangely in the ears of masters accustomed to look on their slaves as belonging to a different order of beings from themselves. They were considered as part of a man's household goods and chattels. It was a new idea that slaves had rights, and that masters and slaves were to answer to the same Lord of all.

Do the same things to them. Act in the same spirit towards them, remembering that they as well as you are servants of the Lord Who is in heaven ; and in your treatment of them bear in mind that they are the servants of Christ, redeemed by Him, equally with you ; for with Him there is no respect of persons, and He values and loves a slave as much as a freeman. Forbear not only stripes, but even threats ; treat them mildly and with charity, knowing that your Lord and theirs is in heaven.

“ This equality of masters and slaves before God is the principle from which, little by little, the idea of social equality developed ; so that these few words contain, as in germ, the emancipation of slaves and the extinction of slavery to be gradually effected under the Christian dispensation ” (Van Steenkiste).

**WE MUST TRUST IN THE HELP OF GOD ; AND PUT
ON THE SPIRITUAL ARMOUR OF GOD THAT WE
MAY BE ABLE TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS**

**10, 11. Finally, Brethren, be strengthened in the
Lord and in the might of His power. Put
you on the armour of God, that you may be
able to stand against the deceits of the devil.**

The Apostle, having laid down many precepts, both general and particular, in order that we may put off the old man and put on the new, now shows us to what power we are to trust for success in our warfare. Be strong in the Lord ; put your trust in

Him alone and in the power of His might, for He is present to help us. If God is with us, who is against us? Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be armed at all points from head to foot, *cap-à-pie*.

The interior help in which we must trust is the grace and assistance of God; and therefore he says, **be strengthened in the Lord**, because, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord; and the Lord shall be his confidence" (Jer. xvii. 7).

There are two motives to make us put our trust in another; the first is when we have a right to look for protection from someone on account of his office; and the second is when he is both able and willing to protect us. Both these motives of confidence are found pre-eminently in God in His relation to us His creatures.

First, His office as Creator obliges Him to exercise special care for those He has made, and therefore St. Peter exclaims, "Cast all your care on Him, for He hath care for you" (1 Peter v. 7).

Secondly, He is Infinite Strength and Power, and always willing to help us; and therefore we can always say, "The Lord is with me as a strong warrior: therefore they that persecute me shall fall, and shall be weak" (Jer. xx. 11; comp. Ps. lxxii. (lxxiii.), 23-28; Isa. xxxv. 3).

Hearing this, a man might say, "If God is Almighty and most willing to help and protect me, I can rest in security, and need do nothing to protect

myself. The victory will be mine without danger and without exertion; I can fold my hands and rest."

No, answers St. Thomas, by no means, for each one must do what in him lies; for if he advances unarmed to the battle he will be in danger, however powerful the king that protects him. God requires our own co-operation, and, therefore, **put on the armour of God**, that is, His gifts and virtues, because by virtue is a man protected against vice (Rom. xiii. 12).

Notice that the Apostle says, that you may be able to stand against the snares or the wiles of the devil, not against his power or violence. The devil knows that the power of our Lord is so great that he can avail nothing against Him, and therefore attacks Him in His members by crafty and deceitful wiles. We must ever bear in mind that the crafty deceits of the devil are more dangerous than his open attacks. Most dangerous of all is it when he disguises himself under the appearance of an angel of light.

12. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.

Our enemies are not visible foes, men of flesh and blood, mortal like ourselves; but spirits that have fallen. If our wrestling were against men it would

not be so dangerous ; for men are visible and can be avoided, weak and can be conquered, human and not implacable ; but the devils are invisible, strong and malicious ; and if we were overcome by men, the wounds would be on the body, not on the soul ; and if death were the result it would not be spiritual death. But our warfare and daily wrestling are against devils, enemies of God, and of man out of hatred to God.

These spiritual enemies the Apostle calls :

1. **Principalities and Powers**, that is, devils who were once in the choirs of Principalities and Powers or Virtues. Some, because they induce men to rebel against God, are known as Principalities ; and others, from the power they possess of punishing men who subject themselves to their influence, are called Powers.

2. **The rulers of the world of this darkness**. Our enemies have a great army, against which we must fight. The world of this darkness is the world of sin, for sin is darkness : " You were heretofore darkness ; but now light in the Lord " (Eph. v. 8). For whatever is dark, in this spiritual sense, belongs to the kingdom of the devil and is subject to him. The world (as far as it is the world of sin) is " seated in wickedness " (1 John v. 19), and for which our Blessed Lord said " He prayed not " (John xvii. 9).

3. **The spirits of wickedness in the high places**. The literal translation would be " the spiritual things of wickedness," a collective abstract word being used

for the concrete "spirits," and the expression, as St. Thomas says, is intended to be most emphatic, as if it were said "spirits who are the fulness of wickedness," wicked without a redeeming point.

In the high places ; wandering in the air above us.

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

13. Therefore take unto you the (whole) armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect.

Your enemies are most wicked, powerful, and crafty ; the stake for which you are contending is the highest conceivable, being heaven itself ; the contest will be long and desperate, and **therefore, take unto you the whole armour of God**, spiritual arms (as material armour cannot help you in this warfare), **that you may be able to resist** the devil, for the more you yield the more will he press on and pursue you (comp. 2 Cor. x. 4 ; 1 Peter v. 9 ; James iv. 7).

The evil day is the day of temptation and danger. **Stand in all things perfect**, that is, prepare yourself so as to stand ready, perfectly prepared. The revised Anglican version has : "and, having done all, to stand." The meaning is much the same ; having done all you can to prepare, stand bravely waiting for attack.

Van Steenkiste understands the phrase to mean, "so prepare yourself that after the conflict is over

you may stand triumphant"; and quotes the French saying: "L'armée qui couche sur le champ de bataille est reputée victorieuse."

14-17. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, (which is the Word of God).

In these verses the Apostle describes the panoply or full armour of the Christian warrior; and he draws his description from the equipment of a Roman soldier of that day. He was writing in a Roman prison, and constantly had Roman soldiers before his eyes.

The defensive armour is first described as consisting of the military girdle, the breastplate, the greaves, the shield and helmet; and then the offensive armour which is the sword, the most important weapon of ancient warfare.

All these things he applies spiritually to the Christian equipped for contest with the devil.

Stand therefore. This expresses the courage and determination with which the Christian soldier should stand ready for attack. The chief superiority of the British soldier is the calm way in which he

can stand in line and bear the attack of even overwhelming numbers. We must stand with courage and confidence, always ready for the sudden attack of our foes.

Your loins girt about with truth. The girdle of the Roman soldier was broad and covered with iron plates overlaid with silver, so as to be at once a support and defence. As a girdle the Christian soldier is to be girt about with truth. Truth is our spiritual belt—our support and defence.

“Let your loins be girt,” says our Lord (St. Luke xii. 35), and by this spiritual girdle is meant the self-denial that restrains and subdues the flesh with its vices and evil desires, intemperance, gluttony, and impurity, which are opposed by sobriety, temperance, and chastity. Girding the loins would also signify the vigour and earnestness with which we should serve God, casting aside sloth and idleness. When a man wearing flowing garments desired rest he would loosen the girdle; when he meant to run, to work, to fight, he would gird himself well and tightly. So God says to Job, “Gird up thy loins like a man” (Job xxxviii. 3).

But why are we to be girded with truth? The Apostle was perhaps alluding to the passage of the prophet, “Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith (that is, faithfulness; or, according to the Septuagint, truth) the girdle of his reins” (Isa. xi. 5). The prophet is here speaking of Christ, and declares that faithfulness will be to Him as a cincture adhering

closely to Him. In like manner St. Paul desires every Christian to be, like his Master, girded by faithfulness, as a cincture to adorn and strengthen him. The soldier's belt was the symbol of the military oath of fidelity ; so, in the Christian soldier, the girdle is the loyal fidelity he plighted in Baptism to his Captain and Leader, Jesus Christ. By this he is so bound to the service of his Master by the bond of love, that he ought gladly to suffer death itself in His service.

St. Thomas understands the word **truth** to mean uprightness and purity of intention.

Those bear the girdle of truth who are sincere and straightforward in all their dealings with others ; therefore let no one who belongs to the King of Truth love a lie, but do all things in truth.

Having on the breastplate of justice. The breastplate was sometimes of brass, sometimes of leather covered with metal plates, and defending the heart and breast. It often descended as a coat of mail to the knees.

In the Christian warrior, justice, in the sense of universal uprightness, is the breastplate ; that is, righteousness of life, or all the Christian virtues that make a man truly just in his duty to God, to his neighbour, and to himself. The truly just man is one in whom there is universal justice embracing all virtue, in whom "all is as it should be." As the thorax, breastplate, or coat of mail covered and protected the heart, so true justice or righteousness

perfects the whole soul and protects a man from the devil (1 Thess. v. 8 ; Isa. lix. 17).

Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The military boots covered not only the foot, but the lower part of the leg ; and the greaves were the armour for the legs. It was most important ; and Homer often uses the epithet of the “well greaved Greeks.”

What answers to this in the spiritual armour ? The feet are the affections of the soul. The soul moves by its affections. The affections of the soul should then be shod “with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” The word here translated **preparation** is derived from a verb to prepare, or establish and settle ; and therefore it means a preparation or basis, firm foundation. So that it would mean, having your feet shod, that is, the affections of your soul rooted on “the firm footing or foundation of the gospel of peace ; that is, with the firm and solid knowledge of the gospel, in which you may stand firm and unmoved, as soldiers do in their military boots, which among the Romans were furnished with spikes for this purpose” (see Parkhurst’s *Lexicon of the New Testament*).

Others understand the word as preparedness, or alacrity of mind to walk along the path of the gospel, however rough it may be and full of thorny trials.

It is called the gospel of peace because through the gospel peace is announced to us (Matt. x. 12).

The shield of faith. The shield, held on the arm,

protected both head and breast from darts and arrows.

The armour hitherto mentioned—the girdle, the breastplate, and greaves—may be taken to indicate the moral virtues. The shield, necessary at all times, is the theological virtue of Faith, the root of Hope and Charity; and, as the shield is added to other armour, so is Faith to the moral virtues. By the shield, darts are rendered harmless; and by Faith, all temptations (Heb. xi. 33, 34). The temptations of the devil come upon us suddenly like darts;* and if we have not faith, penetrate to the heart. They are called **fiery** to show their dangerous nature, because they are apt to kindle the flame of evil desires. To remember the truths of Faith, to act on the principles of Faith, to be guided by its light, will render the worst temptations harmless. We see that our Lord, in opposition to the temptations of the devil, brought forward texts of the Holy Scripture; and so we ought to act when tempted. If, for instance, we are tempted to gluttony, we could call to mind the words of Deuteronomy viii. 3, or Romans xiv. 17. If to impatience or despondency in trials, we can animate ourselves by Matthew v. 11, 12, or Romans viii. 18 and 28. When moved by pride we might repeat Luke xviii. 14 or Matthew xviii. 3.

* Dr. Geikie sees in St. Paul's words about the fiery darts an allusion to the "huge Phalarica spear, hurled afar, with its head of flaming pitch" (vol. ii. chap. xi.). A "Phalarica" was a spear hurled from an engine of war, to set wooden turrets on fire, also a long spear thrown by the hand.

This is one of the many reasons for studying the holy Word of God. If we commit some of these heavenly sentences to memory, we hold in our minds a spiritual shield on which the fiery darts of the evil one are caught, their fire extinguished, and rendered harmless.

The helmet of Salvation. Again there is allusion to Isaias, who says, "a helmet of salvation on his head" (lix. 17).

The helmet, with its nodding plume, protects the head, and is the most necessary and ornamental part of the soldier's armour.

The helmet of the Christian is Hope and Confidence in God, which is at once the protection and the beauty of the spiritual warrior. Remembering all Christ has done, taught, promised, and endured, trusting only in the merits of His Precious Blood, we must cast away all despondency, inordinate fear, discouragement, and despair. If we yield to this temptation, we cease to wear the flashing helmet with its waving plume—the chief ornament of the warrior of Jesus Christ.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

The only offensive weapon mentioned by the Apostle is the sword by which we are to attack our enemies. The spiritual sword is the Word of God; and it is a sharp and trusty weapon that will not fail in the time of danger. The Word of God will always prove our best weapon against all the difficulties and

doubts raised by human reasonings and speculations. It is the sword of the Spirit, because all its efficacy is from the Holy Ghost, Whose power "makes the mouth" of a truly spiritual man "like a sharp sword" against the enemies of the faith (Isa. xlix. 2; Heb. iv. 12).

In temptations, nothing is more efficacious than to repeat in the mind certain words of Holy Scripture and to use them as ejaculatory prayers. All the Saints have constantly used this sword; and St. Jerome particularly notices it of St. Paula, as he mentions in his letter to Eustochium.*

To practise this sword exercise we must read, meditate, and learn by heart many passages of Holy Scripture, and thus endeavour to grasp in our right hand the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Thus, then, is the Christian soldier arrayed with the whole armour of God. His helmet is confidence in God, the hope of Salvation through Christ; his breastplate, righteous deeds of virtue; his girdle, loyal truth and chastity; his shoes, the firm foundation of Gospel truth, making him ready in spirit to follow Christ; on his left arm he bears the shield of undoubting Faith; and in his right hand he grasps with courage the sword of God's Word.

* *Epistola ad Eustochium*, No. 18. The whole letter is most useful to read.

EXHORTATION TO PRAYER

18, 19. **By all prayer and supplication** praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplications for all the saints: and for me, that speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence, to make known the mystery of the gospel.

But however well armed the Christian warrior may be, he cannot be victorious without constant and earnest prayer. In the spiritual warfare God alone gives the victory; and without prayer we cannot be strong in Him and in the might of His power (Exod. xvii. 11). So the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to pray for themselves, for others, and particularly for himself.

He lays down seven conditions of prayer.

1. **By all prayer**: which is fulfilled when a man has recourse to prayer in all things, or prays for all good things.

2. **By the word supplication** we are reminded that our prayer should not be presumptuous and founded on our own merits, but humble. "Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor" (Ps. lxxxv. (lxxxvi.) 1). Supplication means asking through the merits of another—Jesus Christ (Phil. iv. 6).

3. **At all times**. Our prayer should be diligent and continual. "Pray without ceasing: in all things

give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 17). How is our prayer to be continual? As our actual prayer cannot in this life be without ceasing, to pray at all times must be understood to mean—(1) at all appointed and customary times; (2) in times of temptation and danger, when the light and strength of the Holy Ghost is especially needed; (3) to pray without ceasing implies a love of prayer, as when we say a man is always reading, we mean that he loves it and reads whenever he can, and is not prevented by other duties; (4) it refers also to the spirit of prayer and recollection which should sanctify all our actions according to the maxim, To work (that is, for God and in a spirit of recollection) is to pray; (5) those who are in the habit of constant ejaculation pray at all times and in all places.

4. **In the spirit.** That is, in spirit and in truth, with interior attention of mind and charity, not with mere external repetition of words and forms of prayer (1 Cor. xiv. 15). For the comfort of those who find difficulty in concentration of mind in prayer it must be remembered that purely involuntary distractions are not sins and do not deprive our prayers of all efficacy. The two practical points for examination are to ask ourselves: "Did I begin well in the presence of God?" "Am I prompt in rejecting idle thoughts when I am conscious of them?"

To those distracted wilfully, or through careless inattention and want of preparation, St. Cyprian says,

“What sloth it is to allow the mind to wander among empty thoughts and profane ideas when you are praying to the Lord, as if there were anything more important to reflect upon than that you are speaking to God. How can you ask God to hear you if you do not even hear yourself? Do you expect God to be mindful of you when you pray if you are not even mindful of yourself?”

5. In the same watching. Vigilance—watching—is a condition of prayer often insisted upon by our Lord and His Apostles. “Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation” (Matt. xxvi. 41), and “Watch ye therefore, praying at all times” (Luke xxi. 36), are instances that at once occur to the mind. To watch in prayer means to persevere in it, not to tire and become discouraged if God does not appear to hear us, but to continue in faith. No condition of prayer is more important, and perhaps none more difficult, than this patient and courageous persistency. It is highly commended and rewarded by our Lord in the person of the woman of Canaan (Matt. xv. 28), and is taught in the parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii. 2), and in that of the man who knocked at his friend’s door in the night to ask for bread (Luke xi. 5). We must pray with confidence to that Friend Who is always ready to rise to our help because He is our Friend. If He delays it is only for our greater good.

6. With all instance. Instancy means pressing, earnest supplication, urgency in presenting our

petitions. To mean what we say and to desire what we ask for is one of the most evidently necessary conditions of prayer. Anna, the wife of Elcana, is a good example of one whose prayer was persistent and urgent (1 Kings i.).

7. **For all the saints.** The last condition mentioned is that our prayer should be charitable, not for ourselves only, but including others. If our prayers are ennobled by charity they will draw down God's blessing on ourselves ; and therefore should we pray for all the saints, that is, for all Christians. Our Lord has instructed us to say, "Our Father," and not "My Father."

And for me. Apostle as he was, St. Paul humbly begs the prayers of others, thus teaching us that we ought to pray for all pastors, preachers, and missionaries, and for all who are working for souls. And for what should we pray? That God may "give them speech" that shall reach the heart, wisdom that the enemies of God cannot gainsay ; that they "may open their mouths with confidence," and to do this that they may have the grace to study the Word of God and the writings of the Saints in order that, as St. Gregory puts it, "from the Word of God they may learn the Heart of God." We should pray that they may have the speech given them that will move and enlighten and convert sinners ; that they may be always able "to open their mouths with confidence," that is, with holy liberty uninfluenced by the fear of men. Lastly,

that they may be able "to make known the mystery of the Gospel," speaking as ambassadors of God, according to the light and prudence of the Holy Ghost. It is better to pray than to criticise, remembering that the best wine is sometimes contained in the poorest earthen vessels.

St. Paul begs them to pray for three things for himself, and these three things are needed by every preacher: (a) that speech may be given him; (b) that he may prepare himself for preaching to the best of his power; (c) that grace may go with his words, without which he would be only "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

20. For which I am an ambassador in a chain, so that therein I may be bold to speak as I ought.

St. Paul was at the time he wrote this Epistle in a Roman prison, bound as a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and therefore he calls himself an ambassador in a chain or in bonds. His humility is so genuine that he begs the Christian people to pray that he may have such courage and confidence in God that he may say all he ought in spite of persecution. The Epistle to the Colossians was written at the same time, and at the end he says, "Be mindful of my bonds," a touching appeal to the hearts of his spiritual children.

21, 22. **But that you also may know the things that concern me, and what I am doing, Tychicus, my dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to you all things: whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know the things concerning us, and that he may comfort your hearts.**

Remembering how anxious his beloved children in Ephesus would be to know all that he was suffering for God in his Roman prison, he refers them to the bearer of the letter, Tychicus, his dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord, who would be able to tell them all about St. Paul. Tychicus accompanied St. Paul on his third missionary journey, and to his trusty keeping the Apostle gave not only this Epistle, but that to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7), and in 2 Timothy iv. 12 he says that he has sent Tychicus to Ephesus. He is also mentioned by St. Luke (Acts xx. 4) as one of St. Paul's companions in his journey through Macedonia and Greece. Tychicus was to comfort them by assuring them that although St. Paul was suffering for the truth, yet he rejoiced always in the Lord, for his sufferings were only for the love of our Lord and His holy Gospel.

23, 24. Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. Amen.

The Apostle salutes those to whom he is writing, wishing them spiritual graces, peace, charity, and faith. It is no doubt remarkable, as noticed in the Introduction, that he does not mention any particular people, as he does in most Epistles (comp. Rom. xvi). Perhaps he left all the more personal salutations to be delivered by Tychicus, his dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord.

Peace among brethren is always found where faith is strong and charity towards God reigns with sovereign sway, and these are the gifts of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption who love Him sincerely, with a true and perfect love for His own sake. Self-love is corrupt; we must pray, then, that the grace of God may so purify our hearts and make them all for God, that we may be of the number of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with genuine, loyal, and never-failing love, that through Him we may live for ever.

NOTE I.

To encourage the reading of Holy Scripture among Catholics, Pope Leo XIII. has granted the following indulgence:—

“Our most holy Lord Leo P. P. XIII., in an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Sacred Relics, on the 13th day of December, 1898, kindly granted an indulgence of three hundred days, once every day, to all the Faithful of Christ who should, for at least one quarter of an hour, piously and devoutly read the Holy Gospel,* provided they read an edition that has been approved by legitimate authority. To those who thus read every day for a month a plenary indulgence is conceded once a month, on any day that, having approached worthily the holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion, they pour forth prayers to God for the intentions of His Holiness. These indulgences His Holiness has declared may be offered for the souls detained in the fire of purgatory.

“Given at Rome, December 13th, 1898.

“FR. HIERONYMUS M. CARDINAL GOTTI, Praef.”

* The word Gospel in this indulgence stands for any part of the New Testament.

NOTE II.

As to the text used for this commentary, as the book is one of spiritual reading, I have contented myself with taking the literal translation of the Vulgate given in our ordinary English version, commonly known as the "Douay," though first published by the English College at Rheims in 1582. The version I have used is that published in 1879 by Gill and Son, Dublin, with the approbation of the Right Rev. C. Denvir, sometime Bishop of Down and Connor. A few minor changes I have made, in order to give the more exact meaning of the Latin. For instance, (i. 1), for "by" the Will of God, I read "through" the Will of God, the Latin being "per" and the Greek διὰ. And, again (i. 2), instead of "from God the Father," I read "from God our Father," because the Vulgate has "a Deo Patre nostro," and the Greek ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν. Also, in i. 3, "every" is put in, as the Latin has "in omni benedictione." There are some other verbal changes; for instance, translating "qui" by the English form "He" instead of the Latin idiom "Who" (see i. 5).

The Latin and Greek text I have consulted is from a work entitled, "Novum Testamentum Græce et Latine. Textum Græce recensuit, Latinum ex Vulgata versione clementina adjunxit Fridericus Brandscheid, cum approbatione Rev. Archiep. Friburg. Herder, 1893."

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THE COMMENTARY.

**FIRST PART OF THE EPISTLE, THE DOCTRINAL PART,
COMPRISING THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS.**

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